



YORK ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST REPORT

SITE ADDRESS	Theatre Royal, St Leonard's Place, York, YO1 7HD		
CLIENT NAME	Theatre Royal		
YAT PROJECT #	5764	YAT REPORT #	2014/9
MUSEUM ACCESSION #	Pending	GRID REFERENCE	SE 6013 5212
PLANNING REFERENCE #	N/A	AAI OPS NOTICE #	Pending

Interim Report 07.02.2014

Introduction

A watching brief was carried out on Wednesday 05.02.14 by Ben Reeves of York Archaeological Trust on a series of investigative trial pits in the under-stage area of the Theatre Royal, York. The locations of nine trial pits (TP1—9; Figure 1) were proposed in order to characterise the foundations of the brick walls beneath the stage and the underlying archaeological deposits.

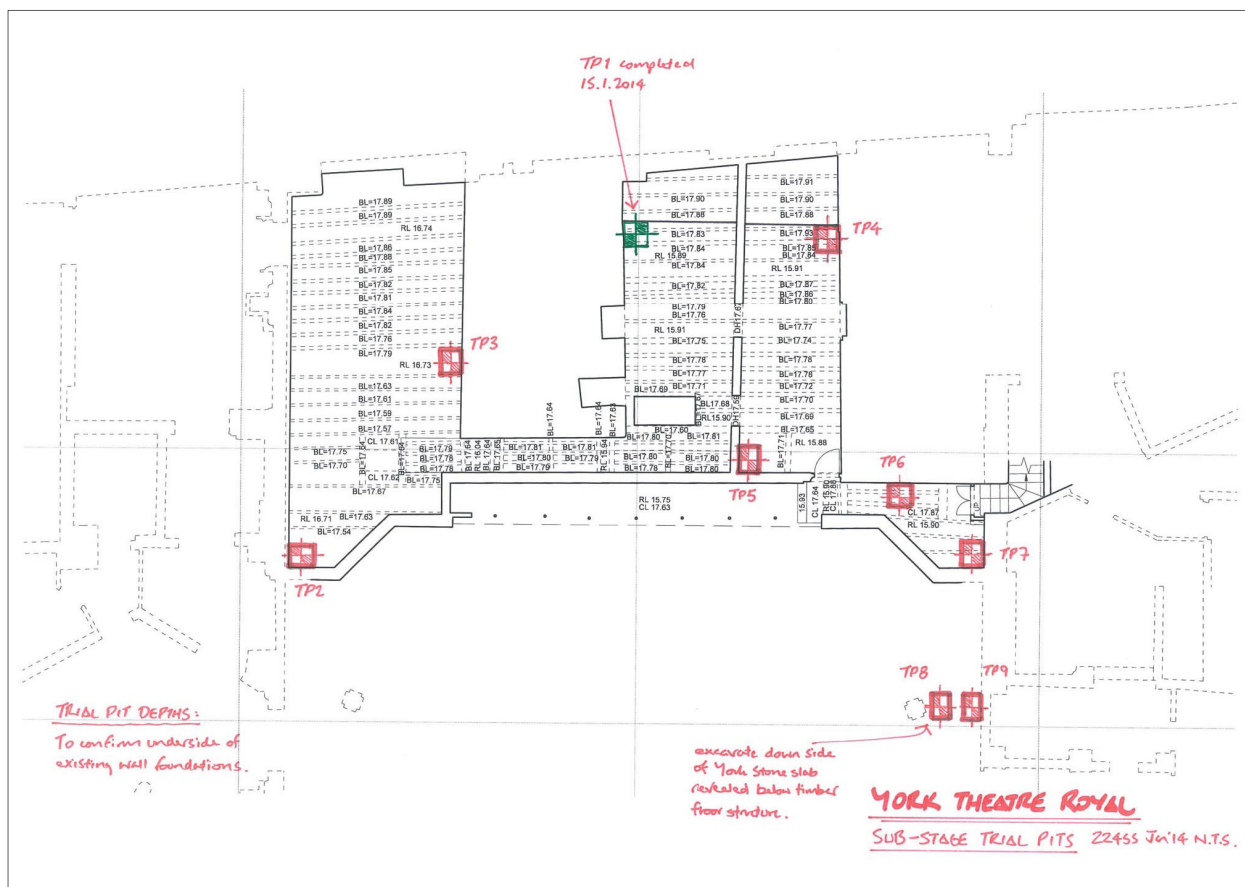


Figure 1 Trial pit locations

Trial pit 1 was inspected and photographed by the archaeologist on 15.01.14. Trial pit 2 was within an area of very restricted access beneath the stage floor and therefore not inspected by the archaeologist for safety reasons. Trial pits 8 and 9, located within the auditorium, were for visual inspection by the structural engineer and were not inspected by the archaeologist before the floorboards were replaced. TPs 3—7 were inspected and recorded in detail by the archaeologist on 05.02.14 and a small finds assemblage was recovered for assessment.

COMPLETED BY	B. Reeves	CHECKED BY	D. Aspden	FINISHED	07/02/14
FINDS	N/A	SAMPLES	N/A	PAGE	1 of 4

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Medieval

Although no definitive dating evidence was recovered from any of the trial pits except TP3, the earliest layers observed in all of the trial pits were visually characteristic of medieval urban deposition. The earliest deposits comprised soft, dark grey-brown gritty silts with moderate charcoal flecks and occasional brick and limestone fragments.

Directly below the concrete raft floor and limestone hardcore levelling beneath, the deposits observed appear to be medieval. Two sherds of medieval green-glazed pottery were recovered (these are yet to be formally identified by YAT pottery specialist). Remains of the limestone, cobble and brick rubble core of the north wall of St Leonards hospital were exposed within within TP3. At a depth of around 0.34m below the concrete floor the top of another section of possible wall was encountered. This ran at 90 degrees to the main wall and may represent either a return of the wall to the north, or an abutting structure on the north side.



Figure 2

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Other evidence for medieval structural remains was observed in one of the recesses below the stage where there is a well. The well was observed and noted during a watching brief in 1986 when it was identified as being of medieval date and possibly related to St Leonard's Hospital (YAT 1986.1009;) It was subsequently recorded photographically in 1991 (YAT 1991.1017) (YAT Gazeteer entry 707). No measured drawings or location plans exist for this structure. The relative levels of the in situ medieval deposits at the north end of the stage area, and that of the top of the well are similar. This suggests that the area between TPs 1 and 3, currently retained behind the 19th century brick walls, is likely to contain undisturbed medieval deposits to a similar height. It is also likely that deposits survive to at least a similar height in the area to the east of TP3 which is also currently concealed behind a 19th century brick retaining wall.

Post-medieval

Subsequent deposition within all of the trenches was related to the construction of the stage, the foundations of which were observed and recorded within all but one (TP3) of the trial pits. The shape and size of the bricks used in the construction of the stage walls suggests a 19th century or later date for their construction.

The most recent deposits were related to the addition of a breeze-block partition in Trial pit 5 and floor make-up deposits related to the laying of the present concrete floor. In TP 7 a large number of spent carbon rods, presumably from early—mid 20th century stage lights, had been deposited under the modern concrete floor.



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Figure 2

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