

BOOTHAM SCHOOL,
57 BOOTHAM,
YORK

A Concise Report on an Archaeological Evaluation

York Archaeological Trust

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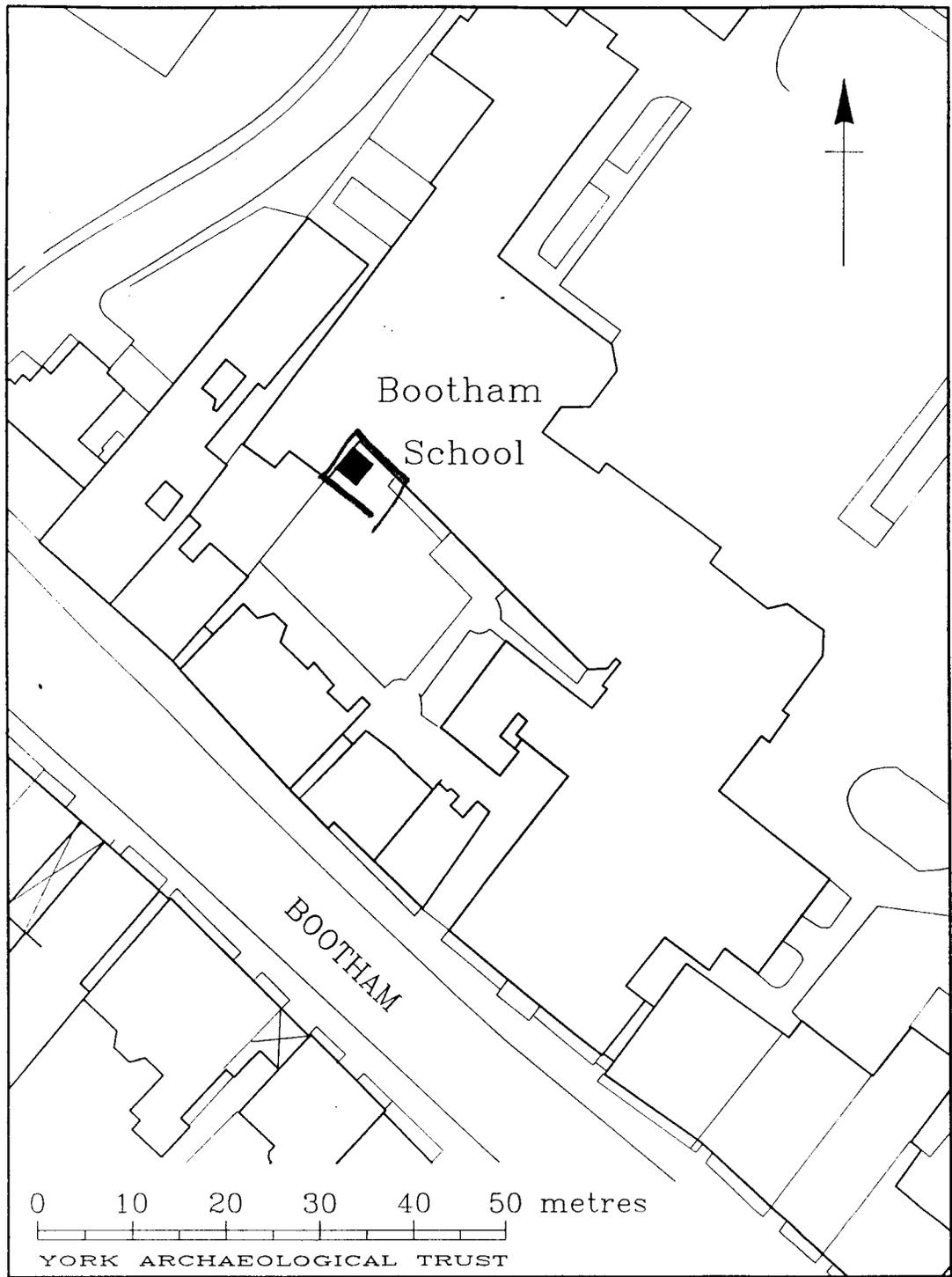
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INTRODUCTION

An archaeological evaluation was carried out by York Archaeological Trust at 57, Bootham, York (Bootham School), to a specification provided by York City Council's Directorate of Development Services Planning and Building Control Group. The specification determined that a trench measuring 3.0m. x 3.0m. be excavated to a depth of 2.0m. below the existing ground surface (i.e. to a level 14.90m. above ordnance datum [AOD]) at national grid reference SE 59945245. The work was carried out over 10 working days between 6th and 21st April 1992.

The rationale of the evaluation was to establish the sequence and survival of strata of pre-Roman to post-medieval date, within the predicted limit of disturbance caused by the construction of foundations for a new range of buildings. Previous work in the near vicinity, conducted in the 1950's and 1960's, had indicated the existence of Roman structures nearby.



Based upon Ordnance Survey Digital Data

Figure 1 Site Location

2 DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

There is no documentary evidence for Roman, Anglo-Saxon or Anglo-Scandinavian occupation of the site. The earliest reference is to the street name itself, which is probably of pre-Conquest origin and means "at the booths". One of the floors of the booths was supposedly found in Bootham school when a hole revealed a cobbled floor six feet from the surface and two feet above the Roman ground level.

There is only fragmentary evidence for medieval property along Bootham. The properties probably did not extend far from Bootham Bar, and then only on the north-eastern side as the space in front of the Abbey walls was contested between the Abbey and the city. The Abbot of Easby had a hospice in his Bootham property and various tenements were recorded in the late 12th century. Otherwise the holdings along the street seem mainly to have been gardens, as mentioned in a 1332 will, tofts or fields. Cutlers seem mostly to be located in Bootham and the parish of St Michael-le-Belfry, which had various outliers of its parish in Bootham.

The most important institution connected with Bootham was St Mary's Abbey, and Bootham was an area of serious contention between the city and St Mary's. A document (undated by Drake) states that the Abbot and monks of St Mary's could not be arrested in Bootham by the authorities except for felony and trespass. In 1308 a confirmation was given to allow the Abbey to hold a fair in Bootham, although this was challenged at various times by the city authorities.

An incident during Elizabethan times reveals houses in Bootham, although possibly of a dubious character. A minor cleric was accused of giving six shillings to people who saw him resorting to a certain house in Bootham. The c.1545 sketch map of York also records "howsis" along Bootham, although it indicates that the houses stop opposite Marygate.

Speed's map of 1610 indicates a continuous line of houses extending a long way along Bootham, which seem to extend to the site. If both the c.1545 map and Speed's map are correct then many new houses had been built along Bootham towards Clifton during the Elizabethan era.

The 1644 siege of York resulted in the firing of the suburbs in order to prevent the attacking forces using the buildings as shelter to undermine the walls. One of the exceptions to the firing was Bootham and as a result the attacking forces blew up St Mary's Tower on Bootham. Archer's map (1680) and Richard's map (1685) both seem to show isolated properties along the north-east side of Bootham interspersed with gardens or orchards. During the 18th century Bootham became a fashionable area and was built up with often large Georgian style houses. In 1810 Todd's map shows a developed street-frontage with ornate gardens behind.

57 Bootham, in particular, seems to have been residential during the 19th century and during the early 20th century was the home of a doctor. Bootham School, which had moved to Bootham from Lawrence Street in 1846, came to have an increasing influence over the area. From its nucleus of number 20 Bootham in 1846 it gradually acquired more property; it added to its accommodation by acquiring properties in 1871, 1879 and 1882. This was

further expanded in 1920 with the acquisition of number 57.

Bibliography

Palliser, D M The medieval street-names of York York Historian Vol 2 pp 2-16 (1978)

Raine, A Mediaeval York A Topographical Survey (London 1955)

A Victoria History of Yorkshire, The City of York Tillot, P M (ed) (Oxford 1961)

Trade directories

3 THE EXCAVATION

The area of excavation originally measured 3.0m.x 3.0m. From a level of c.16.30m.AOD (the surface of layer 1009) this was reduced to 3.0m.x 2.2m., leaving a baulk of strata 0.8m. wide in situ in the western area of the trench. The excavated deposits, each representing a separate event, have been attributed to groups which represent broadly contemporary and associated activities. Deposits on this site were not sampled for environmental evidence as they were uniformly dry and largely re-deposited.

3.1 Group 1 The earliest deposit encountered in the excavation, a friable, mid/light brown sandy clay silt (1022) whose surface was at a level of 14.85m.AOD, differed markedly in colour and texture from the overlying layers, suggesting a significant break in the stratified sequence. Revealed over an area of 2.2m.x 1.4m., 1022 was cut by three features. Of these 1019, an irregularly shaped pit c.0.30m. deep, may be broadly contemporary, as its fill, 1016, was very similar to 1022.

3.2 Group 2 1020 and 1021, both east-west aligned linear features cut into 1022 were, by contrast, filled with looser, dark grey-brown sandy clay silt (1017, 1018), closely similar to the overlying deposit 1015, which covered the whole of the base of the trench. As this appears to have been garden soil, and one of the characteristics of 1018 was the density of coarse components it contained, it is possible that these parallel trenches may have been dug and filled to aid drainage. Features of this type occur frequently on archaeological sites in York.

3.3 Group 3 A series of soakaways or drains 1014 was subsequently cut through 1015, and sealed by a heterogeneous dump of material c.0.75m. thick, recorded as three separate contexts 1013, 1012 and 1011. Of these only 1013 survived across the entire excavated area, 1012 being a separately excavated lense of restricted extent and 1011 truncated by the later feature 1008. These features may indicate the construction of buildings in the near vicinity for the first time in the period spanned by the excavated sequence.

3.4 Group 4 A substantial, north-south aligned drain construction cut, 1008, with two roughly parallel channels in its base, was cut through 1011 to a maximum depth of c.0.75m. Only the western edge of this feature was within the limits of the excavated area, its width within the trench of c.2.00m. therefore being an absolute minimum for the width of the feature as a whole. Only 1025, the soil packing for the drain against the western edge of the construction cut, survived subsequent robbing intact. The drain was sealed by 1009, a layer of orange-brown sandy clay silt up to 0.50m. thick, into the surface of which was cut a single post-hole 1003, c.0.40m. deep and with a rim diameter of similar dimension.

3.5 Group 5 1008 was completely robbed. 1007, a layer of brick rubble and mortar in the base of the robbing cut 1024, was all that remained of the drain structures themselves. The robbed feature was backfilled with 1006, a dark brown clay loam; 1002, the backfill of 1003, was closely similar, and may have been deposited at the same time. 1006 was subject to slumping, indicated by 1004, the irregular depression in its surface. A later feature 1023, whose extent appears to have been contained by that of 1008, was filled with the brick rubble and mortar 1005. This may represent secondary robbing,

although there was no indication of any substantial feature surviving the original removal of the drain in the area covered by 1023. It may therefore represent a wholly separate, later feature.

3.6 Group 6 The uppermost deposits comprised c.0.30m. of broken up concrete and hardcore and coarse gravel, 1001. The overlying layer of topsoil banked up against the walls immediately to the west and north of the excavation was regarded as unstratified.

3.7 SUMMARY

The character of the activity represented by Group 1 is ambiguous. From Group 2 onwards, however, the area seems likely to have been part of a garden. The soakaways of Group 3 may hint at the existence of nearby structures from this stage onwards, but that Group, and possibly Group 2 as well, are likely to be associated with the garden wall to the north and west of the excavation. The large Group 4 drain may have been constructed with the building which now forms the toilet block, to the north of the excavation. The removal of that drain, represented by Group 5, and the dumping of debris probably derived from further building work (Group 6) were the most recent activities in evidence on the site.

4 FINDS ASSESSMENT

4.1 The site produced a range of material types (see appendix), all of which have been viewed and assessed. The iron objects have been x-rayed. Identifications of all material are based only on initial viewings, not on the result of research.

4.2 Small finds

4.2.1 Coins and tokens

A copper alloy religious token of late/post medieval date was recovered.

4.2.2 Iron

Various nails, hinges and fragmentary strips of no great significance were recovered.

4.2.3 Copper-alloy

A ring and a button of post-medieval date were found (see also the token referred to above).

4.2.4 Lead

A single lead alloy offcut was found.

4.2.5 Fired clay

Several bowls and stems of clay tobacco pipes were recovered.

4.2.6 Stone

A piece of worked stone, probably not a whetstone and therefore of uncertain function, was found.

4.2.7 Glass

Several glass vessel fragments were found including (small find numbers 21, 22, 23) fragmentary 18th century apothecaries bottles and the base of a glass drinking vessel (small find no. 25).

4.3 Bulk finds

4.3.1 Pottery

Most of the contexts from this trench represent late build-up or dumping and the pottery recovered from them is consistent with this type of site usage, in that the range of ceramics recovered is extensive. Many of the deposits produced sherds dating to the Roman period as well as fragments ranging from the 13th to the 18th centuries. However, the end date of this material is very consistent and little if any of it need date much later than the mid-18th century. One sherd is worthy of mention - a very burnt base fragment of a small Weser dish. This type of early 17th century pottery imported from Germany is rare in York.

Two contexts, 1016 and 1022, which are stratigraphically contemporary, both date to the medieval period. Fragments of Brandsby-type, Scarborough and Humber wares were recovered, suggesting a date of the 14th or possibly 15th century.

4.3.2 Tile

One fragment of medieval crested ridge tile, dating to between the 13th and 15th centuries, was recovered from context 1022.

4.3.3 Animal Bone

The animal bone was not analysed since all came from re-deposited material which would not have been informative.

5 CONCLUSIONS

5.1 *Deposit Survival*

Excavation ceased at the depth limit of 2m. where medieval deposits were encountered for the first time. It seems likely that any deposits of medieval or earlier date would be well preserved beneath the post-medieval dumped material.

5.2 *Period Analysis*

5.2.1 Roman, Anglian, Anglo-Scandinavian and Medieval (1st - 16th centuries)

Deposits of medieval date were encountered at the base limit for excavation. They consisted of a small pit and a contemporary ground surface. No earlier deposits were reached.

5.2.2 Post-medieval (16th-19th century)

The majority of deposits excavated were of this period and they consisted largely of a series of drain trenches and dumps of no archaeological significance.

5.2.3 Modern

Broken concrete and garden soil which covered the site were the only contexts of modern date encountered.

6 *ARCHAEOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS*

With the possible exception of Group 1, all deposits were of post-medieval origin. The character of the stratification indicates that the ground level in this area has been built up substantially from medieval (and presumably earlier) levels. It is probable that the Roman road under Bootham ran along a low ridge of moraine, and that the natural ground surface slopes away to the north. The post-medieval dumping was probably carried out to compensate for this trend, and raise the level of the garden to that of the houses on the street frontage. Barring topographic anomalies, it therefore seems unlikely that any significant archaeological deposits will be threatened by the development within the specified two metres depth.

APPENDIX 1

York Archaeological Trust
Artefact Record Summary Sheet

Site name: 57 Bootham (Bootham School)	Site code: 1992.7
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BULK FINDS	BOXES	SMALL FINDS	NUMBERS
Pottery	1	Coins	
Tile	in misc	Iron	7
Stone	1 frag	Copper-alloy	3
Slag		Lead	1
Crucibles		Silver	
Plaster/Daub		Gold	
Leather		Glass	4
Wood		Bone/Antler	
Bone, Human		Ivory	
Bone, Animal	1	Fired clay	9
Soil samples		Stone	1
Other misc (shell, mortar)	1	Jet	
		Textiles	
		Wood	
		Other	
Total	3	Total	25

APPENDIX 2

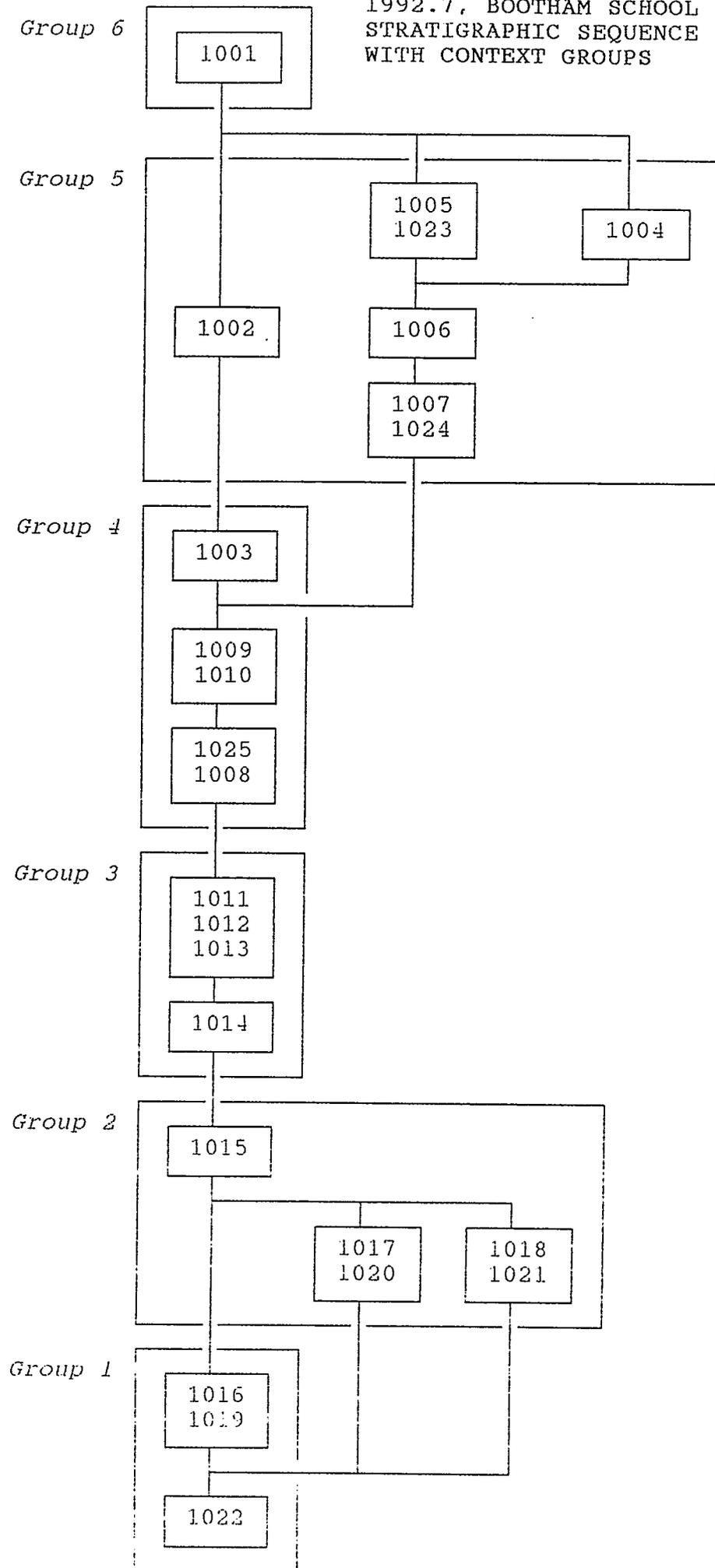
Small finds list

Material	SFNO	Context	Simple name
Copper alloy	5	1016	Token
Copper alloy	6	1016	Ring
Copper alloy	20	1016	Button
Fired clay	3	1002	Tobacco pipe
Fired clay	13	1006	Tobacco pipe
Fired clay	14	1007	Tobacco pipe
Fired clay	19	1007	Tobacco pipe
Fired clay	12	1009	Tobacco pipe
Fired clay	15	1011	Tobacco pipe
Fired clay	16	1012	Tobacco pipe
Fired clay	18	1013	Tobacco pipe
Fired clay	17	1015	Tobacco pipe
Glass	22	1006	Vessel
Glass	23	1007	Vessel
Glass	24	1007	Vessel
Glass	25	1015	Vessel
Iron	9	1006	Object
Iron	8	1007	Object
Iron	11	1011	Object
Iron	10	1015	Nail
Iron	1	1016	Nail
Iron	7	1016	Hinge
Lead alloy	4	1011	Offcut
Slag	2	1017	Slag
Stone	21	1015	Fragment

APPENDIX 3

Pottery spot-dating lists

1002	Roman to 18th century; 17th/18th century
1006	Roman to 19th century; mid 18th century -/-
1007	Roman to 18th century; 1740 - 1760
1009	Roman to 19th century; mid 18th century -/-
1011	late 13th to 19th century; second half 18th century
1012	Roman to 19th century; post 1720
1013	Roman to 19th century; later 18th/early 19th century
1015	mid 13th to 18th century; late 17th century plus
1016	Roman to 16th century; 15th century
1022	Roman to 16th century; 14th century



APPENDIX 5

List of Contributors

This report is the result of the combined efforts of a number of Trust staff and others. The major contributors were as follows:

Excavation and report coordination ... Mark Whyman

Documentary research Chris Daniell

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Pottery.... Sarah Jennings

Tile.... Sandra Garside-Neville

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Editor.... David Brinklow