

GEORGE STREET/MARGARET STREET, YORK.

REPORT ON AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

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ABSTRACT

Between the 8th and the 19th December 1997, York Archaeological Trust carried out a field evaluation at George Street/Margaret Street, York, on behalf of the Diocese of Middlesborough. The area evaluated lies to the east of George Street and north of Margaret Street and is at present a public car-park and the site of the former St. George's School. The northern limit of the area is effectively defined by a street known as Chapel Row. The evaluation revealed evidence for the survival of archaeological deposits from the Roman to the post-medieval periods.

The earliest feature identified was a Roman curvilinear gully, probably dating to the 2nd century AD. This was aligned north-south and may indicate initial division and settlement of land on the east side of the River Foss. The gully was rapidly backfilled, the deposits containing occasional fragments of demolition material that seem to indicate the presence of a substantial Roman building close by. By the late 2nd or early 3rd century a second gully was excavated on a roughly east-west alignment. This was in turn back filled and the area probably became arable or common land until the early medieval period. Medieval dump deposits dating to the 11th or 12th century were the next deposits recovered and there followed a sequence of dumping and levelling, interspersed with periods of pit excavation, through to the 17th century. These dump deposits appeared to have accumulated within a large landscape feature bisecting the site on a north-west to south-east axis on the line of the medieval parish boundary. This may have been the King's Drain which is marked on the 1852 Ordnance Survey map of the area. The medieval dump deposits backfilling this were then truncated by the foundation and drainage trenches for the Victorian terraced houses and St. George's School situated on the site.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Location and Scope of Work

In December 1997 York Archaeological Trust carried out a field evaluation at George Street/Margaret Street, York (NGR SE 6078 5145 - Figure 1). The work was carried out on behalf of the Diocese of Middlesborough, prior to a planning application to construct a new community centre, medical centre, and residential flats on the site. The proposed development area was approximately 6500 square metres, and the evaluation was carried out to a specification approved by the City of York Council.

1.2 Aims

The aims of the evaluation were :-

- i) to establish the presence/absence of archaeological remains within the proposed development area.
- ii) to determine as far as reasonably possible, the location, extent, date, character, condition, significance and quality of any surviving archaeology.
- iii) to make available the results of the investigation.

1.3 Methodology

The evaluation was based on a small sample of the development area, and consisted of three trenches (Fig. 2), each 3m x 3m in size, and a bore-hole survey. Two of the trenches were positioned within Peel Street public car-park, Trench one on the George Street frontage, and Trench two on the Chapel Row street frontage. The third was excavated within the former St George's school yard, on the Margaret Street frontage. The bore-holes were positioned to give a transect across the development area from George Street on the west to Margaret Street on the eastern side of the development, and four cores were taken.

The overburden was removed to the first significant archaeological horizon, under close archaeological supervision, by a JCB Sitemaster mechanical excavator using a toothless ditching bucket. The trenches were then cleaned and all archaeological deposits were hand excavated to determine their extent and nature, and to retrieve finds. Excavation continued either to the top of natural geology or to a maximum depth of 1.5m from the car-park surface. All archaeological features were planned at a scale of 1:20 using the single context planning system. At least one long section of each of the trenches was recorded at a scale of 1:10. All significant archaeological deposits were photographed using colour print film. Recording followed procedures laid down in the York Archaeological Trust Context Recording Manual (1996).

All finds and the site records are currently stored with York Archaeological Trust under the Yorkshire Museum accession code YORYM:1997.151

2. GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY

The solid geology of the area is Bunter Sandstone (British Geological Survey (England and Wales) Sheet No. 63 1967), laid down in the Triassic period, 225 million years ago (Warrington, 1974). This is overlain by warp and lacustrine clays, formed by peri and post-glacial activity within the vale of York,

and capped by alluvial deposits. These form a thick band of naturally derived river silts that slope down rapidly to the north and west towards the river Foss. The development area slopes gently down from the south-west corner at the junction of George Street and Margaret Street from approximately 13.00m Above Ordnance Datum (AOD) to roughly 11.50m AOD at the northern end of the site. The area under investigation lay to the north of St George's Church, on land formerly occupied by St George's School, at present occupied by Peel Street public car-park.

3. ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

A desk-top study of the site was prepared by York Archaeological Trust in 1996 and so only a brief outline will be presented here.

Archaeological evaluation of sites close to the development area has produced varying results. At the former Jewson's Timber Yard, on the west side of George Street in 1992, deposits of Roman date and evidence of Viking Age industrial activity less than 0.5m beneath the surface were discovered (Lilley, 1992). On the site of the former St George's School on Walmgate, c. 100m east of the development area, deep archaeological deposits survived beneath modern deposition and cellaring 1.10m beneath the street level. These extended in places to a depth of 4.2m below the present ground surface (ARCUS 1995). However excavations on the site of the former Bass Brewery Yard at the junction of George Street and Dixon Lane demonstrated that all archaeological deposits had been removed by cellars of the Brewery buildings (Lilley, 1990).

It has been suggested (Kemp with Graves, 1996) that medieval Fishergate followed the line of a Roman road leading from the south east gate of the Roman legionary fortress along a spur of relatively high land to follow the bank of the River Ouse to the south. However, little excavated evidence exists to support this, although there are Roman cemeteries on either side of Fishergate to the south of Blue Bridge Lane and these are commonly found alongside main roads.

The boundary between medieval parishes of St. Margaret and St. George ran north-west to south-east across the site, bisecting the development area, just to the east of the present boundary wall between the public car-park and the former St. George's School. This may have followed the line of a Roman or medieval road or track or other landscape feature no longer visible on the ground.

In medieval times George Street had two names (Palliser 1978). From Walmgate to Dixon Lane (formerly Church Lane) it was known as Nowtgail and from there to Fishergate Bar and beyond it was called Fishergate. The first cartographic evidence for settlement in the area is John Speed's Map of 1610, which shows the area to be devoid of houses except at the junction of George Street and Walmgate. However, Sir Robert Watter's will dated 1609 founded an almshouse known as Watter's Hospital on Nowtgail which comprised seven cottages under one roof and suggests that Speed's Map was not accurate. Watter's Hospital was said to have been originally built as an assembly hall for the Haberdasher's Company, was repaired in 1627 and remained substantially unaltered into the 19th century (VCHY 1961). It was replaced by a two storey brick building on the same or an adjacent site in 1844 and was probably demolished in 1956.

In 1826 a Wesleyan Methodist Chapel, known as St George's Chapel, was built at the northern end of the site. In 1897 the premises were acquired by St. George's Roman Catholic School for Girls which opened on the site in 1900, and was still in use as a school into the 1980's. St. George's Roman Catholic Church opened on the 4th September 1850.

Nathaniel Whittock's painting of the city in 1858, clearly shows St. George's Roman Catholic Church together with a collection of other buildings of a scale and form different to that of the surrounding terraced houses. It seems likely that these included Watter's Hospital and St. George's Wesleyan Chapel together with a number of smaller houses which may have been 18th century in date.

4. THE EXCAVATION RESULTS

The trenches (Figure 1) are discussed in numerical order. Within each trench the contexts are considered in chronological order, from the bottom up. In all trenches the orientation was based on site north rather than true north. Site north relates to a north western orientation in relation to true north.

4.1 Trench 1 (Figures 2 and 3)

The trench was located close to the George Street frontage on the western side of the site and was machine excavated to a depth of c. 0.70m to remove the overburden. Beyond this all deposits were hand excavated.

4.1.1 The earliest deposit, located at 11.43m AOD, was a compact mid orangy brown sandy clay, with occasional patches of sandy gravel (1054). This was believed to be of natural origin and contained small areas of rounded cobbles probably deposited by fluvio-glacial action.

4.1.2 Cutting into the natural clay at the eastern side of the trench was a shallow linear feature (1049) which was slightly curved in character. This was aligned north to south, curving slightly towards the west at either end with sides which broke moderately sharply from the surface, and sloped moderately down to a flattish base. The feature measured 0.76m wide and 0.30m deep and was completely backfilled with friable light to mid brown sandy clay silt (1026) containing occasional cobble and shell inclusions. It also contained Roman brick and tile related to a hypocaust, (a floor of tile and concrete, supported on low tile pillars to allow hot air to circulate under the floor), and seven sherds of Roman pottery dateable to the 2nd or 3rd century AD with a single intrusive sherd of the 4th century AD. At the southern end of the feature a flat slab of rock measuring 0.27m long, 0.23m wide and 0.03m thick was recovered resting on top of several large cobbles. This may have been a post-pad for a later timber structure (see 4.1.3). Sealing (1026) was a deposit of friable brown very slightly sandy clay silt (1016) with occasional cobbles, charcoal and mortar flecks. Brick and tile fragments (one from a massive tegula, a flat tile with a flange at either side used in Roman tile roofs) were also recovered as well as eight Roman pottery fragments dated to the 2nd century AD. This deposit was interpreted as a secondary backfill deposit to level and firm up the ground. Since it was only a thin skim of material overlying the primary backfill it was difficult to know whether the possible

post-pad, which was visible after the initial machining, was inserted at a later date than either (1026) or (1016). It could simply be part of the secondary backfill (1016). The function of the gully (1049) is difficult to determine; it may be a drip gully for a circular structure or building or a drainage channel for rainwater. When it went out of use material from the demolition of a substantial Roman building was used to backfill it.

4.1.3 In the south-western corner of the trench a second linear feature (1018), interpreted as a shallow ditch or gully, was discovered. This was aligned ESE-WNW and measured 0.90m wide, and 0.30m deep. The sides broke sharply from the surface into a moderately steep slope, before breaking again close to the base into a steep near vertical slot (0.20m wide), which contained a slightly rounded base. The relationship between this feature and the curvilinear gully (1049) was not clear, though it appears that (1018) in the north facing section truncated (1016), the levelling layer for the possible timber structure. The primary fill of ditch (1018) was a dark grey sandy clay (1017) with moderate gravel and occasional charcoal and mortar flecks. This appeared to completely backfill the eastern part of the ditch visible within the trench and contained six sherds of pottery dateable to the 2nd to 3rd century AD and an intrusive fragment of 13th century brick. Overlying (1017) was a very dark grey mixed sandy clay loam (1011) which contained moderate amounts of rounded cobbles and backfilled the rest of the ditch. The latter deposit also appeared to spread out to the north over the edge of the ditch. It contained seventeen sherds of Roman pottery dateable to the 2nd and 3rd century, as well as Roman brick and tile (tegula) and some intrusive medieval brick and tile. A spread of sticky dark brown silty sand (1020) containing moderate amounts of gravel and occasional brick, tile and mortar fragments overlay the natural clay (1054) to a depth of 0.04m to the north of (1018). This may represent the heavily truncated remnants of a Roman ploughsoil which was later partially sealed by (1011) when ditch (1018) fell out of use and was backfilled. The ditch or gully contained Roman pottery and tile as well as intrusive medieval fragments and it is thought likely that it represents a change in land use or ownership in the late 2nd or 3rd century.

4.1.4 A thin deposit of friable brown slightly sandy silty clay (1021) containing Roman brick and pot boiler fragments was originally thought to overlie (1026) in a small clearly defined area at the northern end of the trench. This was interpreted as a levelling deposit for a structure (1019) located at 11.38m AOD and defined as a more or less square stack of bricks, three courses (0.16m) in height, covering an area 0.40m square and bonded with a layer of brown clay silt rather than mortar. The bricks were mid to dark orangy red in colour and each measured over 0.21m long, 0.13 to 0.145m wide and 0.04m thick. All appeared to have been fractured or fragmentary prior to being laid, the stack therefore was thought to have been constructed from recycled broken bricks. During the excavation it was thought that (1016) overlay the base of the stack and therefore this was a Roman timber structure utilising the flat slab of rock and the stack of bricks as post-pads. The bricks were later dated to the medieval period and may either have sunk under their own weight into the earlier Roman deposit (1016) or had this deposit raked up and trampled round them after they were stacked. It is possible that it and the rock slab may form the post-pads of a timber framed building of medieval date but it is thought more likely that they represent a pile of broken construction materials within a yard, perhaps that of a builder or a brick maker, the latter commonly living and working in the Walmgate area in the medieval period.

4.1.5 Cutting through (1016) was a small circular stake-hole (1015), 0.14m in diameter and 0.11m deep, which was completely filled with friable grey brown slightly clayey silt (1014) containing occasional charcoal, mortar, shell and a fragment of Roman pottery. This also appeared to spread out around the stake-hole, covering an amorphous shaped area 0.68m in length and 0.45m wide. The stake-hole may relate to the possible medieval timber structure, being close to the brick stack (1019). Sealing (1014) and the second tier of the brick stack was a friable grey brown slightly sandy clayey silt (1010) which contained occasional pebbles and a fragment of residual Roman pottery. This may relate to occupation of the possible timber structure, its final disuse or, more likely, trample deposits within a medieval yard.

4.1.6 The secondary backfill (1011) of the Roman gully/ditch (1018) also sealed an oval stake-hole (1023), which measured 0.18m long, 0.12m wide and 0.15m deep. This was completely backfilled with sandy loam (1022) which contained frequent gravel inclusions. Eleven other similar ephemeral features were also located cutting into the natural deposits at the base of the trench, including eight possible stake-holes (1028), (1030), (1032), (1036), (1038), (1042), (1044), and (1048); the bases of two possible post-holes (1034), and (1040); and a small shallow depression (1055). No dateable material was recovered from any of these features. Patterning was not discernible within the spatial arrangement of this small collection of features and they may just represent horticultural or agricultural activity of Roman or later date on the site, rather than being part of a domestic/industrial building.

4.1.7 Three other ephemeral features thought to have been of modern date were also recovered. A small oval slot (1012) orientated east to west, 0.32m long, 0.17m wide and 0.14m deep, with a V-shaped profile was located just to the south of the centre of the trench. This was completely backfilled with very dark grey brown clay sand (1008) which contained frequent rounded gravel and occasional charcoal and mortar flecks. A possible very small stake-hole, with two associated slots (1013) was located to the east of (1012). This was backfilled with (1009), a very similar deposit to (1008). A third circular stake-hole (1025), located on the western side of the curvilinear gully (1049), truncated (1016) and measured 0.08m in diameter and 0.14m deep. It was filled with very friable brown organic silt which contained fragments of decayed wood of probable modern date. These three features may have formed a 19th-century fence line prior to later construction work on the site.

4.1.8 Overlying (1011) was a loose, dark greyish purple ashy clinker (1053), thought to have been a dump of domestic coke ash of 19th century date. This was only observed during the drawing of the east facing section and was found to be 0.70m wide and 0.08m deep. Sealing this to a depth of 0.45m was a compact very dark brown silty sand (1002) which covered the entire trench and was interpreted as a dump of 19th century garden soil. Two construction cuts, thought to have been contemporary, were discovered to truncate the latter deposit. The first, aligned east-west, stepped down three times towards the east end of the trench, (1005), (1006), and (1007). All three had steep near vertical sides, were c. 0.80m wide and had a flattish base, (1005) was 0.73m deep, (1006) 0.88m deep, and (1007) 0.98m deep. The stepped character may have been excavated to try to reach a solid footing due to the presence of gully (1049) at the eastern side of the trench. The second construction cut (1050), was aligned north-south, and contained a similar rectangular trench profile, measuring 0.51m wide and 0.44m deep. Both construction cuts contained 19th century brick walls. The first contained (1004),

constructed of mid bright reddish orange bricks, of average dimension 0.21m x 0.09m x 0.06m, mortared together with a mid greyish brown sandy lime mortar. This wall survived to a height of ten courses, (the first three courses of the foundation incorporating a wider stretcher configuration (five courses in the lowest step), the upper courses being one brick thick). Construction cut (1050) contained brick wall (1051), built with similar materials to (1004) but standing only five courses high (the initial course being a single stretcher, the upper courses single bricks). These were interpreted as the foundations for the Victorian brick terraces fronting onto George Street. The construction cuts were backfilled with a loosely compacted dark grey-brown gravelly sandy silt (1003) and (1052) respectively, which contained occasional brick, tile and mortar inclusions. The terraces were demolished prior to the construction of the school playground in the 1950's but the foundations were left in. No evidence for floors was recovered. The foundations were completely sealed to a depth of 0.18m by a layer of crushed limestone hard-core (1001) and the trench was finally capped by a 0.11m thick layer of tarmac at 12.12m AOD.

4.2 Trench 2 (Figures 4 and 5)

The trench was positioned on the northern side of the Peel Street car-park, on the Chapel Row frontage. It was initially machined to a depth of 0.92m. Below this all archaeological deposits were hand excavated.

4.2.1 Natural deposits were not reached within the trench. The earliest deposit, at 10.13m AOD, was a layer of friable mid greyish brown clayey silt (2033) containing occasional fragments of tile, brick and mortar and interpreted as a dump or build-up of late medieval domestic rubbish. Truncating this deposit were two possible features (2031) and (2032) which were quite difficult to define. Both appeared to be sub-oval or sub-circular in shape and shallow in character; (2031) measured over 1.50m long, over 1.10m wide and 0.30m deep, with shallow sloping sides and a slightly rounded base; whereas (2032) had similar sides and base but measured 2.08m in length, over 1.24m wide and 0.21m deep. The former feature was completely backfilled with friable brownish grey clayey silt (2027), which contained occasional brick/tile and pottery fragments dateable to between the 11th and 15th centuries, shell, charcoal, coal ash, and mortar, these inclusions being particularly concentrated in the south-west corner of the feature. The latter was almost completely filled with light greyish clay silt (2030) which contained frequent small brick/tile and pottery fragments dateable to the 13th - 15th centuries. This was sealed in turn by a very dark brown silty loam (2029) with moderate charcoal and mortar flecks, and occasional brick/tile and pottery fragments dateable to the 13th - 14th centuries, which completed the backfilling of (2032). Both these features have been interpreted as either shallow pits or depressions excavated for the disposal of demolition and domestic waste of late 14th or early 15th century date. On the western edge of the trench a dump of medium sized tile fragments (2028), dateable to the 13th - 17th century, in a matrix of slightly sandy silty clay was also discovered resting directly on top of (2033). This covered an area 0.45m long and 0.12m thick, which continued under the western balk. This was also considered to have been a late medieval or early post-medieval dump of waste materials possibly originating from the demolition of structures close to the site.

4.2.2 Sealing all of the above deposits was a sticky dark brown clayey silt (2026) containing moderate amounts of broken tile, bone and rounded pebbles. This was the second spit of a fairly thick mixed dump of domestic waste, building materials and garden soils, which included an initial spit (2023) which consisted of very similar dumped material. Both deposits contained pottery dateable to the 11th - 15th centuries, and brick and tile dateable to the 14th - 15th centuries. The layer was up to 0.40m thick, levelling the trench off at 10.49m AOD. This deposit was truncated by a narrow slot (2025), which was only observed once the first spit (2023) had been removed. It is possible that it was cut from a higher level, the top of the feature being truncated by a 19th century construction cut (2009), and possibly disturbed by post-medieval horticultural/agricultural activity on the site. The slot (2025) was aligned north-south and measured over 0.45m long, 0.25m wide, and 0.10m deep, with moderately steep sides and a flat base and continued under the southern balk. It was completely backfilled with friable grey brown clayey silt (2024), which contained occasional brick/tile fragments and charcoal and mortar flecks. The feature was difficult to interpret but may be associated with horticultural activity such as the insertion of a seed bed.

4.2.3 Overlying (2023) at 10.46m AOD, was a mixed friable mid to dark brown silty loam (2021) with moderate to frequent amounts of brick, tile, broken limestone, charcoal and rounded pebbles. This dump appeared to slope down to the south-west perhaps into a shallow depression and contained pottery dateable to the 11th - 14th centuries and brick and tile which appears to date to the 14th - 15th centuries. This dump, though containing more demolition materials than any other deposit described so far, still appears to have been dumped from clearance or construction elsewhere and included some domestic waste rather than being the result of the demolition of buildings on the site. Truncating (2021) was a small circular pit (2017) which measured 0.39m in diameter and was 0.22m deep. It had steep sides and a flattish base and was completely backfilled with friable dark grey clayey silt (2011) with moderate amounts of mortar and charcoal flecks and brick and tile fragments. A sherd of 16th century pottery from its backfill seems to suggest an early post-medieval date for its backfilling. At the north end of the trench, truncating (2023) but probably broadly contemporary with (2017), was a second circular pit (2020). This measured 0.46m in diameter and 0.20m deep with moderately sloping sides and a rounded base. The pit was completely backfilled with friable mixed grey brown slightly sandy clayey silt (2019) which contained occasional pebbles, brick/tile and pottery fragments dateable to the 11th - 17th centuries. Both features were probably early post-medieval in date and may have been garden waste pits or small holes excavated for trees or shrubs.

4.2.4 Sealing (2021) was a dark brown silty loam (2018) containing frequent charcoal and mortar flecks and moderate amounts of small brick/tile fragments. This covered an area 0.75m long, and over 0.22m wide to a depth of 0.05m and may relate to the bottom skim of a later post-medieval deposit not machined away completely. The layer and the backfill (2019) were both overlain by a compact mid yellow brown silty loam (2044), up to 0.10m thick in the north-west corner, which contained moderate charcoal and mortar flecks and occasional brick and tile fragments. The deposit was covered with friable dark brown silty loam (2043) which contained moderate amounts of charcoal and mortar flecking. Both deposits probably represent a continuation of dumping into the 18th century.

4.2.5 Truncating (2023) in the south-east corner was a steep sided, round bottomed post-hole (2022) which appeared to have an associated drag cut to the north side of the feature where the post had been pulled out at a later date. The post-hole measured 0.30m in diameter and was 0.45m deep and it and the drag cut were completely backfilled with sticky firm mid brown sandy clay (2010) with moderate small to medium brick and tile fragments, charcoal and rounded gravel inclusions. The majority of the pottery recovered from this fill was dated to the 17th century and the brick and tile assemblage would also point to a 16th or 17th century date. This post-hole may have been associated with a garden feature or structure built in the early post-medieval period. The trench was then sealed with compact tenacious dark grey brown silty loam (2042) up to 0.22m thick and containing moderate amounts of charcoal flecks and limestone fragments. This appeared in section to have been dumped into a hollow or shallow depression which sloped down towards the east and was possibly of 18th century date.

4.2.6 Truncating (2042) was a construction cut (2009), which was L-shaped in plan, running north to south across the trench, with an east-west projection close to the southern balk. The construction cut measured between 0.34m to 0.50m wide and 0.21m deep, with steep near vertical sides and a flat base. The cut continued under the southern balk where it appeared to widen and deepen. A second associated cut (2016) forming a small stub extending out from its western side was located 0.68m from the northern balk. This measured 0.46m in length, 0.44m wide and 0.04m deep, with similar sides and base to (2009). Both construction cuts contained primary deposits of grey brown or brownish grey clayey silt (2008), (2015), with occasional small brick and tile fragments, mortar, ash, charcoal and small rounded pebbles. The only real difference between the two deposits was their degree of compaction, (2008) being much more compact than (2015). Both were interpreted as primary slumps of material from the sides of the construction cuts, the difference probably being attributable to trampling. Two brick walls (2003) and (2004) were then built within (2009). Wall (2003) was orientated north-south, ten courses (0.91m) high, over 1.56m long, and between 0.23m and 0.34m wide. It was built with handmade reddish orange bricks measuring 0.24m x 0.12m x 0.07m, bonded together with a light greyish brown sandy lime mortar. The base foundation courses consisted of two courses of stretchers, a further eight courses of single brick thickness being the remains of the former upstanding wall. A slight east-west brick buttress was also found filling construction cut (2016). Wall (2004), was T-shaped; the main stretch aligned east to west, with a short stub at its east end aligned north-south. A gap of 0.63m between it and (2003) may have marked the position of a door. The east-west section of the wall contained two (three at the eastern end) courses of stretchers as a foundation and seven upper courses of headers representing the remains of a partially demolished wall. The north-south stub was more substantially built and contained two courses of stretcher and header for the foundation and eight courses of stretchers or double headers. The wall was constructed with similar bricks to (2003) and bonded together with a similar mortar with dimensions of over 1.94m long east to west, over 0.64m long north to south, between 0.24m and 0.41m wide and a height of 0.99m. The wall foundation cut was backfilled with friable grey brown clayey silt (2007) containing occasional brick and tile fragments, small rounded pebbles, and charcoal and mortar flecks. Both brick walls probably represent the partially demolished remains of a row of 19th-century terraced houses that stood on the south side of Chapel Row.

4.2.7 A third construction cut (2014) aligned north-east to south-west was discovered in the extreme south-eastern corner of the trench. It broke sharply from the surface and had moderately steep sides and a base which was concealed by a brick wall (2013). This made it difficult to measure the overall dimensions of the cut, the only observable measurement being its depth which was 0.38m. The brick wall (2013) was eight courses (0.73m) high, constructed with mid to dark orangy red bricks measuring 0.23m x 0.12m x 0.08m and bonded together with a light greyish sandy lime mortar. The courses were an assortment of stretchers and headers, not appearing to be laid to a specific pattern, possibly indicating that the wall was constructed quickly and roughly perhaps as a division between St George's School and the last terraced house in Chapel Row or was associated with drainage, possibly representing the north side of a brick manhole. The foundations were then sealed with compact sticky mid to dark greyish brown sandy clay (2012) which contained moderate amounts of small rounded gravel and mortar.

4.2.8 All the deposits were then sealed to a depth of 0.40m with firm crumbly, dark grey brown slightly sandy clay silt (2041) which contained frequent small tile fragments, mortar and charcoal flecks. This in turn was sealed with compact dark brown clay silt (2040) which contained a thin lens of light greyish mortar as well as moderate small brick and tile fragments, charcoal and mortar flecks and occasional rounded gravel. Both deposits were interpreted as modern dumps to raise the ground level, possibly after the demolition of Chapel Row in 1956.

4.2.9 Truncating these deposits was a rectangular construction cut (2006) which was situated on the eastern side of the trench. This measured 1.02m long, 0.78m wide and 0.18m deep, with an edge that broke sharply from the surface and sloped gently down to a flat base. It contained a square brick structure (2002) 0.66m wide, which was machined down to the bottom course, with a brick base which may represent a Victorian or modern sump or soakway for the school. The construction cut for the sump was backfilled with very sticky black silty clay (2005) which contained occasional to moderate gravel and brick fragments. Internally the structure contained a sticky black silty sand (2001) with occasional patches of olive green and light brown sand and frequent brick and tile fragments and cinders. Possibly associated with the sump was a further construction cut (2039) aligned north-south and exposed in the south-facing section. This broke sharply from the surface had near vertical sides and a flattish base, measuring over 0.40m wide and 0.88m deep. The construction cut contained a mid brown glazed ceramic drain pipe which rested on a bed of concrete and was completely sealed with slightly sticky, mottled mid greyish brown silty clay (2038) containing moderate small brick and tile fragments. The pipe may be a former down water pipe for the school the sump being part of the same drainage system.

4.2.10 Overlying (2038) was a dump of dark purplish coke ash or clinker (2037) possibly dumped on waste ground prior to the construction of the school playground. This was overlain by a 0.16m thick dump of crushed brick and tile in a matrix of mid greyish brown slightly sandy clayey silt (2036) representing a layer of primary hard-core. Sealing this was a 0.08m thick layer of crushed limestone hard-core (2035) which in turn was sealed at the top of the trench sequence by the tarmac surface (2034) of the present car-park which levelled the trench off at a height of 11.41m AOD.

4.3 Trench 3 (Figures 6 and 7)

The trench was positioned on the eastern side of the development area, within the former playground of St. George's School close to the Margaret Street frontage. It was machine excavated to a depth of 1.15m below which all deposits were excavated by hand.

4.3.1 Natural deposits were not reached within this trench. The earliest deposit, located at 10.62m AOD, was a compact sticky mid to dark brown silty clay (3035) with moderate charcoal and mortar flecking. It was interpreted as a dump of domestic waste within a large feature, the edge of which was beyond the trench limits. Depth restrictions within the trench prevented excavation of the deposit but pottery recovered from the upper surface was dated to the 11th century and the discovery of residual Roman pottery and brick fragments points to possible Roman activity in the area. Overlying this deposit was a series of dumps of variable composition but similar derivation which appeared to dip down towards the north. These were also only partially excavated for the recovery of dateable artefacts. A firm dark slightly greyish orangy brown silty sandy clay (3034) directly overlay (3035) and contained frequent patches of firm sticky mid reddish orange clay and occasional rounded pebbles and flecks of charcoal, mortar and shell. This was overlain in turn by a firm sticky mid orangy brown silty clay (3033) containing moderate charcoal, and occasional rounded gravel. Two dumps, one at the south and the other at the north end of the trench, overlay (3033); these were a mid yellowish brown silty clay (3031) containing moderate gravel and occasional brick and tile fragments and mortar and charcoal flecks; and a compact yet friable dark greyish brown clay silt (3032) with occasional charcoal flecks and small rounded pebbles. Overlying the whole trench and all of the previously described deposits was a friable mid reddish brown sticky slightly sandy clay silt (3012) with moderate small patches of orangy clay, and occasional brick and tile fragments, rounded gravel, flecks of mortar and charcoal. It contained sherds of pottery dated to the 11th and 12th centuries and plain tile of around 13th century date. It was 0.23m thick, levelling the whole trench up to a height of 11.04m AOD. This deposit was probably the final dump levelling off and capping the large feature which the lower dump deposits backfilled.

4.3.2 Truncating (3012) was a linear slot (3011) orientated east-west. Only the north side of the cut survived, breaking gently from the surface to fall steeply to a rounded base. The slot measured 0.37m wide, over 2.45m long and 0.14m deep and was completely backfilled with compact, plastic light orange brown silty clay (3010) with moderate pockets or lenses of pale brown clay silt and occasional medium sized cobbles, small to medium tile fragments and mortar and charcoal flecks. The pottery and tile fragments point to a 14th or 15th century date for deposition. The slot was thought to have been excavated and immediately backfilled with compacted clay to form a possible footing for a sill beam wall. (3010) was then truncated by a second east-west slot (3009) which turned sharply to the south, at the eastern side of the trench. This second slot measured 0.36m wide, 2.32m long, and 0.23m deep, with the southern extension measuring 0.82m long, 0.46m wide and 0.30m deep. The whole slot was backfilled with firm tenacious dark brown slightly sandy silty clay (3007) with occasional cobbles, brick and tile fragments, oyster shell, and charcoal and mortar flecks. This second slot may also have been

associated with the sill beam footing (3010) but the fact that it truncated (3010) may indicate that the new structure was erected on the site of the old one, utilising the outline of the

original sill beam as a guide. The pottery would also seem to suggest a 14th century date for its later infilling. No evidence for the original wooden beams was recovered so it was thought likely that, once the structures fell out of use, the timber foundations were removed.

4.3.3 Overlying footing (3010) was a friable mid brown sticky sandy clay silt (3008) which contained occasional small to medium tile and limestone fragments, medium sized cobbles, and charcoal and mortar flecks. This deposit covered virtually the whole of the northern half of the trench to a maximum depth of 0.32m and is evidence of continued dumping activity within the vicinity possibly while the structure associated with the second slot (3009) was in use. This dump was then truncated by feature (3004) which broke sharply from the surface into steep sides, the base being beyond the south-facing section. This possible late medieval pit, ditch or slot was completely backfilled to an excavated depth of 0.31m with friable dark brown sandy clay silt (3003) which contained moderate small clay patches, occasional small to medium pebbles, small limestone fragments and charcoal and mortar flecks. This material was probably redeposited as the pottery dates from the Roman period and the 11th century and the tile from the 13th century. The deposit was thought more likely to have been of 14th or 15th century date and the feature may simply be a rubbish pit dug on waste ground

4.3.4 On the south side of the trench a further possible pit (3005) was discovered, possibly contemporary with (3004). This was also only partially visible, being largely beyond the north-facing section but it had gradually sloping sides and was backfilled to a depth of over 0.06m with friable grey brown clay silt (3006) with occasional patches of orange clay, small pebbles and mortar flecks. This also contained residual pottery dating to the Roman period and the 11th century, as well as tile dated to later than the 13th century. Fill (3006) was then truncated by a second possible pit (3002) which had gradual to steep sloping sides, the base again being beyond the north-facing section. Filling the pit to a depth of over 0.25m was a friable mid brown gritty clay silt (3001) which contained occasional small to medium tile fragments, small to medium pebbles, mortar and charcoal flecks and a sherd of pottery dated to the 15th century. Both features have been interpreted as domestic rubbish pits dating to the 15th century.

4.3.5 Sealing (3001), (3007) and (3008) to a depth of 0.37m was a friable mid grey brown sandy clay silt (3025) with occasional very small brick and tile fragments, small pebbles and charcoal flecks. This was concentrated on the southern side of the trench and may represent a build-up of post-medieval horticultural/agricultural soil. Overlying this and (3003) was a friable mid grey brown clay silt (3021) with occasional small cobbles and charcoal and mortar flecks. This may be the backfill of a depression in the ground surface, possibly caused by subsidence of the deposits infilling the large feature described earlier.

4.3.6 Truncating (3021) was a large feature (3036), which was only observed in the east-facing section, the trench just clipping its southern edge. Its cut, which was 0.34m deep, broke sharply into steep sides, the base being beyond the south-facing section. It was backfilled with two deposits. The primary fill was a compact light grey brown silty clay (3020) to a depth of 0.26m, containing occasional brick and tile fragments, pebbles, shell, and mortar and charcoal flecking. This was overlain by a light grey silty clay (3019) to a depth of 0.18m which contained brick and tile fragments and charcoal and

mortar flecks. The feature was thought to represent the continuation of the dumping process and pit excavation for rubbish disposal, possibly into the 18th century.

4.3.7 Overlying (3019) were two deposits. The first was a mid grey clay silt (3018) which sealed (3019) to a depth of 0.28m and contained occasional brick fragments and charcoal and mortar flecks. This appeared to continue the sequence of the backfilling of depressions created by the subsidence of lower deposits. A compact friable dark grey clay silt (3028) with moderate small pebbles and occasional brick and tile fragments and charcoal flecks was also found to overlie (3019) and may be part of the same event associated with (3018). At the south end of the trench a friable sticky mid grey sandy clay silt (3022) overlay (3018) to a depth of 0.49m and contained occasional small brick/tile fragments, small pebbles and charcoal and mortar flecks. This, like (3025), was thought to have been a build up of horticultural soils, perhaps accumulating above more stable and compacted deposits, or alternatively a levelling deposit to raise the height of the ground surface. (3022) and (3028) were overlain by almost identical deposits (3024), (3017) and (3027), a mixed silty clay with frequent ash, small pebbles, moderate mortar, and occasional limestone fragments. These are thought to have been 18th or early 19th century levelling deposits.

4.3.8 Truncating (3017) and (3028) was a linear construction cut (3029) aligned north-south across the middle of the trench. This was 1.09m wide and 0.42m deep with a stepped side on the west and a more gradually sloping side to the east. The base was flat and was completely sealed by a brick wall (3026) constructed of mid orangy red bricks, bonded with hard greyish white sandy lime mortar. The wall stood to a height of twelve courses, 0.89m, and was 0.70m wide at the base and 0.36m wide at the top. The thickness of the wall may be explained by the fact that it was not only a property boundary but also marked the parish boundary between the churches of St. George and St. Margaret. The wall's brick foundation and construction cut were completely backfilled with dark grey brown friable sandy clay silt (3030) with moderate brick, tile and mortar fragments, and occasional charcoal flecks.

4.3.9 Overlying (3027) and (3030) to a depth of 0.41m, in the northern half of the trench, was a compact dark grey silty clay (3016) with occasional brick and tile fragments, pebbles and charcoal flecks. At the southern end of the trench a friable mid grey brown sandy silt (3023) with occasional small limestone fragments overlay (3024) to a depth of 0.22m. These deposits may represent build-ups of garden soils or levelling dumps after the construction of the wall in the 19th century.

4.3.10 Sealing the whole trench at 11.56m AOD was a 0.64m thick layer of modern disturbance (3015) which included drains, concrete and manholes which criss-crossed the entire trench. These structures can be associated with the former site of the demolished outside toilets for St. George's School over which the trench was positioned. Also included within this deposit was a 0.25m thick layer of brick rubble hard-core which was overlain by a thin layer of crushed limestone and pale brown sand (3014). The latter deposit formed a thin bedding deposit for the tarmac surface which sealed the entire trench at a height of 12.32m AOD.

4.4 The Bore-hole Survey (Figure 8)

Four bore-holes were sunk to give a broad representation of the depth of archaeological deposits in an east-west orientated transect across the site. Bore-hole 1 was positioned on the George Street frontage close to Trench 1. Bore-hole 2 was located half way along the north side of Peel Street, within the perimeter of the public car-park. Bore-hole 3 was located at the extreme eastern end of Peel Street and Bore-hole 4 was on the Margaret Street frontage in the playground of the former St. George's School. The following bore-hole logs give approximate depths and descriptions of deposits in chronological order from the bottom up. An attempt has also been made to relate them to either natural or anthropogenic processes on the site.

4.4.1 Bore-hole 1 (BH1)

The bore-hole was cored to a total depth of 3.5m, the earliest deposit recovered being a mid reddish brown boulder clay with moderate large cobbles which appeared at 2.9m. Above this, from 2.2m below the present surface, a mid reddish brown clay with frequent small limestone flecks and occasional rounded gravel inclusions was located and was sealed by a second 0.40m thick layer of boulder clay, similar in composition and colour to the primary deposit. A compact very tenacious mid brownish orange silty clay with occasional charcoal flecks, small degraded limestone and sandstone fragments was discovered above this, appearing at 0.90m from the surface. All of the above deposits were thought to be natural in origin, the latter representing a possible disturbance zone between naturally occurring alluvial deposits and archaeology. Sealing this was a 0.50m thick build-up of friable mid orangy brown slightly sandy silty clay, with occasional small patches of mid orange clay and small brick and tile fragments. This probably represents a build-up of dump deposits on the site. Overlying this was a layer of white crushed limestone hard-core, which was finally covered by the tarmac surface of the car park.

4.4.2 Bore-hole 2 (BH2)

The earliest deposit, located at a depth of 2.4m, was a mid reddish brown boulder clay, with moderate limestone flecking and occasional rounded cobbles. This was overlain at 1.7m by a mid reddish orange silty clay with frequent degraded limestone and sandstone fragments, pebbles and rounded gravel and occasional charcoal flecks, which in turn was sealed at 1.5m by a mottled mid orange sandy clay. All of the above deposits were thought to have been natural in origin and were covered by a 1.10m thick deposit of dark brown silty clay with moderate brick and tile fragments and occasional rounded gravel which appeared 0.40m from the surface. The upper most 0.40m of the bore-hole core was made up of modern hard-core and tarmac.

4.4.3 Bore-hole 3 (BH3)

This bore-hole was excavated to a maximum depth of 6.00m, at which point mid orangy grey sandy clay with occasional angular and sub-angular gravel was recovered. From 4.9m, bright yellowy orange brown silty sand which contained moderate angular and sub-angular gravel inclusions and thin interleaved bands of clay was found to overlie the earlier deposit. A stiff compact mid orangy brown

slightly sandy silty clay sealed it from 4.2m containing similar inclusions to the earlier deposit. All of the above were thought to be naturally occurring alluvial

and glacial deposits of no archaeological significance. Overlying these deposits was a 0.30m thick layer of mid orangy brown slightly sandy silty clay with frequent sub angular gravel and moderate limestone fragments and charcoal flecking. This was thought to have been the earliest archaeologically derived deposit, possibly representing the disturbance of natural deposits. From 3.1m, a soft sticky mid brown silty clay containing moderate to frequent small angular and sub-angular gravel inclusions was located which was then overlain by a soft sticky mid brown silty clay which raised the ground level to 2m below the present surface. At 0.80m a compact sticky mid greyish brown silty clay with occasional small brick and tile fragments and mortar flecks was recovered, which probably represents medieval dumping on the site. A compact but friable dark brown sandy silt with moderate brick and tile fragments and mortar flecks which appeared at 0.40m has been interpreted as modern dumps to raise the ground surface. All of the above deposits were then sealed by a layer of hard-core and finally the tarmac surface of Peel Street.

4.4.4 Bore-hole 4 (BH4)

The lowest deposit within the bore-hole was a mid orangy brown sandy gravelly clay, located at 3.2m below the surface. Above this a 0.30m thick layer of stiff mid pinkish orangy brown silty clay with frequent rounded pebbles, gravel and pockets of sand was recovered. A similar deposit of clay (much pinker in colour) sealed this at 2.45m from the surface. This was then overlain by a 0.95m thick layer (to 1.4m below the modern ground surface) of stiff pinkish light brown sandy clay which gradually changed higher up to a mottled mid reddish brown sandy clay which contained lenses of sand. All the above deposits were deemed to be of natural origin. Covering the natural from 0.90m was a mottled mid orangy brown silty clay with moderate brick and tile fragments and mortar flecking. This was overlain by what appeared to be a 0.20m thick layer of clay and ash, which may represent preserved occupation and floor deposits on the site or further domestic dumping activity. This was then covered by a dark grey brown silty clay, which appeared at 0.30m below the surface. Finally, a 0.20m thick layer of hard-core made up of crushed brick fragments covered the earlier deposits prior to the area being sealed by a tarmac surface.

4.4.5 Two engineering bore-holes, not archaeologically monitored, were also sunk. These are only approximately located, number 5 (BH5) being on the south side of Peel Street in the backfilled cellars of the former St. George's School canteen and number 6 (BH6) at the eastern end of Chapel Row, not far from Trench 2. Both showed that a considerable build-up of archaeological deposits had taken place which matched the log from BH3; BH5 showed that there had been a build-up of 3.80m of deposit above the natural, the initial 1.3m probably being cellar infill and modern backfill; BH6 showed a similar picture with 3.70m of build-up above natural deposits.

4.4.6 Conclusions from the Bore-holes

All of the bore-hole cores reached natural deposits which varied in depth across the site; BH1 - 0.90m, BH2 - 1.5m; BH3 - 3.9m; BH4 - 1.4m; BH5 - 3.8m; and BH6 - 3.7m. This suggests a general trend from fairly shallow archaeological deposits on the George Street frontage towards deeper, stratified archaeological deposits in the middle of the site at the end of Peel Street and Chapel Row and

then rising up again towards Margaret Street. The depth of deposits in BH3, BH5 and BH6 suggests that a large feature such as a linear ditch or shallow stream course may bisect the middle of the site on a north-south orientation. The shallow depth of archaeological deposits on the Margaret Street frontage (BH4) was surprising compared to the deep deposits located closer to Walmgate in 1995 and may indicate a narrow ridge of natural deposit at this point extending from the ridge of higher ground that is visible on the George Street frontage (BH1).

5. ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS

5.1 Introduction

Excavations were undertaken at George Street, York during December 1997 by York Archaeological Trust. Deposits in three trenches produced a small assemblage of vertebrate remains, amounting to two boxes (each box approximately 20 litres). The pottery assemblage suggests that most of the material from Trench 1 is Roman in date, although a single sherd of 13th century date was identified from Context 1020. Whilst deposits from Trench 2 and 3 appear to be mainly medieval and post-medieval in date, four of the contexts in Trench 3 also produced fragments of Roman pottery.

This report evaluates the potential of the recovered vertebrate assemblage.

5.2 Methods

Material from twenty-seven of the thirty-one bone-bearing contexts was recorded. The remaining four contexts were of modern date, or described as unstratified by the excavator, and were therefore excluded.

Semi-subjective, non-quantitative data were recorded for each context regarding the state of preservation, colour, and the appearance of broken surfaces ('angularity'), whilst quantities and identifications were noted where appropriate. Additionally, semi-quantitative information was recorded for each context concerning fragment size, dog gnawing, burning, butchery and fresh breaks.

5.3 Results

The range of identified species recovered from the excavations is shown in Tables 1-3.

5.3.1 Trench 1

Whilst overall the material from Trench 1 was reasonably well preserved, some of the fragments had a rather battered appearance; this was particularly noticeable on the bones from Context 1026. Three human bone fragments from a juvenile individual were identified within the assemblage from this context,

suggesting the presence of reworked or redeposited material. Colour was recorded as brown or fawn, with little variation within contexts.

Evidence of fresh breakage and dog gnawing was negligible, affecting few bones (i.e. 0-10% from each context). The proportion of butchered fragments from Contexts 1011 and 1017 was high (over 50%) and included many split and heavily butchered cattle metapodials. This practice of systematically breaking up the shafts of cattle long bones, presumably for the extraction of marrow, has been noted from other Roman assemblages in the region and throughout the Roman Empire.

A total of 143 (2461 g) fragments were recovered from this trench, of which 52 (1446 g) were identifiable to species. The assemblage consisted mainly of cattle remains (Table 1), the majority of which were metapodials. Caprovid, pig and chicken remains were also noted in very small quantities.

The nature and extent of the butchery is reflected in the small number (7) of measurable fragments.

5.3.2 Trench 2

Deposits from Trench 2 produced 67 (1905.4 g) identifiable and 95 (889 g) unidentifiable fragments. Preservation of this material was very good, although, as with Trench 1, some contexts (2010 and 2023) contained a few fragments that appeared battered or rounded. Most fragments were a gingery-brown in colour, with little dog gnawing, butchery or fresh breakage evident.

The assemblage from this trench was composed mainly of caprovid and cattle remains (Table 2), and included a large ram horncore chopped through its base. Pig and cat bones were also identified, along with those of chicken and ?woodcock (cf. *Scolopax rusticola* L. Additionally, two fragments of fish were noted but it was not possible to identify them to species or species group.

Trench 2 produced only twenty measurable bones, three mandibles with teeth and three isolated teeth.

5.3.3 Trench 3

The smallest assemblage was recovered from Trench 3, amounting to only 60 fragments (1444.5 g) of which 22 (1042 g) were identifiable to species.

Most of the deposits produced small quantities of moderately preserved bone, although as with material from other trenches, there were small numbers of battered or rounded fragments present. Most bones were fawn or brown in colour.

Butchery evidence was present and included a few split cattle metapodial shaft fragments.

Cattle remains made up the bulk of the assemblage, but caprovid and pig remains were also present. Fish were represented by a single ?cod (cf. *Gadus morhua* L.) premaxilla (Context 3006) and a dog tibia was noted from Context 3001. There were only 5 measurable fragments, 2 mandibles and 3 isolated teeth.

5.4 Statement of potential

The small size of the recovered bone assemblage, the rather broad dating framework, and the limited number of bones which can be used to obtain age-at-death and biometrical information, preclude any further detailed recording and interpretation of the extant assemblage. However, preservation of the material was mainly good from all three excavated areas, suggesting that further, more extensive, excavation would provide a useful assemblage of moderate size, particularly if a tighter chronological framework were achieved.

Important comparative Roman assemblages from York include those from Wellington Row (Carrott *et al.* 1995) and Tanner Row (O'Connor 1988). Medieval and post-medieval vertebrate assemblages also exist from York and a large well-dated assemblage from George Street could be compared with material from Post-conquest Coppergate (Bond and O'Connor in press), the Bedern (Hamshaw-Thomas, in press), Walmgate and Skeldergate (O'Connor 1984). Whilst much material from this period has been excavated in and around York, little has been fully analysed and published, leaving a large gap in our understanding of the activities being undertaken in the city.

5.5 Recommendations

No additional work on the recovered material is recommended.

Any destruction of these deposits should be accompanied by an adequate sampling strategy, with appropriate provision for a post-excavation programme. Similarly, if further excavations take place at this site then every effort should be made to investigate any revealed deposits (especially contexts with good organic preservation), including an intensive regime of sampling.

5.6 Retention and disposal

The bones should be retained.

5.7 Archive

All vertebrate remains from George Street are currently stored in the Environmental Archaeology Unit, University of York, along with paper and electronic records pertaining to the work described here.

Table 1. Vertebrate remains by context from Trench 1, George Street, York.

Species		1010	1011	1014	1016	1017	1020	1026	Total
<i>Sus</i> f. domestic	pig	-	2	-	-	-	-	1	3
<i>Bos</i> f. domestic	cow	-	40	-	-	3	-	1	44
Caprovid	sheep/goat	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	1
<i>Gallus</i> f. domestic	chicken	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1
<i>Homo sapiens</i>	human	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	3
Unidentified		3	52	2	5	9	2	18	91
Total		3	95	2	5	12	3	23	143

Table 2. Vertebrate remains by context from Trench 2, George Street, York.

Species	2005	2007	2008	2010	2011	2019	2021	2023	2026	2027	2028	2030	Total
<i>Felis f. domestic</i> cat	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	2
<i>Sus f. domestic</i> pig	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	3	-	-	-	5
<i>Bos f. domestic</i> cow	1	-	-	2	-	-	3	5	5	6	-	3	25
Caprovid sheep/goat	-	-	2	7	-	-	-	8	6	3	-	2	28
<i>Gallus f. domestic</i> chicken	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	2
cf. <i>Scolopax rusticola</i> ?woodcock L.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	1
Unidentified fish	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
Unidentified bird	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
Unidentified	-	-	4	30	2	3	8	10	19	17	1	1	95
Total	1	2	6	41	3	4	11	25	34	28	1	6	162

Table 3. Vertebrate remains by context from Trench 3, George Street, York.

Species		3001	3003	3006	3007	3010	3012	3032	3035	Total
<i>Canis</i> f. domestic	dog	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
<i>Sus</i> f. domestic	pig	-	-	1	1	-	-	1	-	3
<i>Bos</i> f. domestic	cow	4	-	3	4	1	1	1	-	14
Caprovid	sheep/goat	1	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	3
cf. <i>Gadus morhua</i> L.	?cod	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	1
Unidentified		3	1	3	24	3	1	3	-	38
Total		9	1	8	29	4	3	5	1	60

6. FINDS ASSESSMENT

6.1 The Small Finds

The ironwork from the site included nails (sf's 5, 6, 8 and 9) from contexts 2027, 3007, 2023, 2010 respectively and a spike with three nails (sf 7 context 2023). A strip or possibly a blade (sf 4) was recovered from context 2026 and a possible fragment of a barrel padlock (sf3) was found in context 3001. Slag was recovered from contexts 2010, 2021 and unstratified in Trench 2. A copper alloy stud (sf1) was found in context 3003 and a fragment of copper alloy (sf2) in 2029.

An antler comb toothplate blank (sf 15, context 3032) and fragment of a double-side comb (sf11, context 2010) suggest the manufacture and use of antler and bone combs.

A single piece of blue glass from context 3032 might be Roman but would require specialist attention to be certain.

6.2 Pottery

6.2.1 Trench 1

Fifty-nine sherds of pottery were recovered which span a date range from Roman to modern. Most of the sherds are small and rather scrappy suggesting re-working of deposits over a long period. The lower part of the trench contains exclusively Roman pottery but higher up the sequence there is a little medieval and post-medieval pottery.

context	no of sherds	spotdate	comment
1002	9	19th	with residual 1st-3rd century sherds
1003	4	18th	with residual Roman (3 sherds)
1009	4	11th	with residual Roman (3 sherds)
1010	1	2nd-3rd	
1011	17	2nd-3rd	all scrappy sherds
1014	1	Roman	
1016	8	2nd	
1017	6	2nd-3rd	
1020	2	13th	1 sherds (residual?) Roman
1026	7	1st-4th	1 sherd 4thc, rest is earlier

6.2.2 Trench 2

Apart from a single sherd of Roman pottery in context 2008, the earliest pottery from this trench is 11th century in date. This early pottery is almost always found residually in later deposits with a range of later wares. The forms include the usual range of domestic and table wares.

context	no of sherds	spot date	comments
2005	2	19th	with residual 11th century
2007	1	uncertain	overfired and unrecognisable
2008	8	16/17th	with residual Roman and 11th-13th century
2010	15	17th	with residual medieval
2011	1	16th	
2015	1	11th	
2019	4	17th	with residual 11th century
2021	8	17th	with residual medieval
2023	30	16th?	1 sherd 16th, rest is 11th-15th
2026	36	15th	with residual medieval
2027	7	15th	with residual medieval
2028	2	17th	
2029	4	14th	
2030	2	14/15th	

6.2.3 Trench 3

The earliest pottery in this trench is Roman in date but this always occurs residually in later contexts. The 11th century date given to the earliest dated contexts is based on the appearance of Stamford wares together with Anglo-Scandinavian shell-tempered wares and gritty wares.

context	no of sherds	spot-date	comments
3000	9	19th	with residual medieval
3001	1	15th	
3003	6	11th	with residual Roman
3006	10	11th	with residual Roman
3007	10	14th	with residual Roman and 11th century
3010	3	14/15th	
3012	6	11/12th	
3032	6	11th	with residual Roman

6.3 Ceramic Building Materials

6.3.1 Roman Material

Roman material was represented by roof tile (tegula and imbrex) and hypocaust tile. The tegulae have large flanges which may be associated with earlier military manufacture. The hypocaust tile is brick of indeterminate size, and also a fragment of circular pila tile. Associated with the material are a couple of fragments of stone which may have been used for paving.

6.3.2 Medieval Material

Medieval material comprises of flanged roof tile (which dates to around the 12th century), peg and plain roof tile dating to between 13th and 16th century, ridge/curved tile (this could be 12th century, but may be associated with the peg and plain tile), and medieval brick.

There is quite a large sample of brick, which is characterised by a narrow thickness and broad breath. These may be 'wall tile' which was used for infilling timber-framed buildings. This sample often has indented borders, and in one case a brick has a mark on the top surface which may be a tally mark or brickmaker's signature. These bricks show some variation in manufacture, which indicates different brickmaking sources. Some of the medieval material shows signs of reuse, and some of the plain roofing tile and bricks have a pale coloured slip, which may be an attempt to imitate the colour of stone. The medieval brick is mostly in half-brick fragments.

6.3.3 Post Medieval Material

The post medieval material is represented by brick. Judging by the measurements these bricks date from around the 18th and 19th centuries.

The bricks are slop-moulded, and two have brown vitrified headers, which may or may not be deliberate. One of the bricks has the impression of a small shoe heel on it.

6.3.4 Comments

This sample should be retained until it can be studied further and recorded thoroughly by a ceramic building materials specialist. It shows a useful range of forms and fabrics from a wide spectrum of building materials. The paving stones should be identified by a geologist.

Context	Form/s	Date
u/s (Trench 2)	Brick (B117mm)	17th-19th
1003	Plain	13th+
1004	Brick (L222/B110/T63mm), Brick (L230/B107/T53m)	18th+
1008	Plain	13th+
1009	?Plain (small frag)	?13th+
1011	Medieval brick (T38mm), Plain, Brick (?Roman), Tegula (massive)	14th-15th
1016	Tegula (massive), Cobble, Limestone (?paving)	Roman
1017	?Plain (small frag)	?13th+
1019	Medieval brick (T30/B130mm), Medieval brick (indented border, T34mm/B132mm), Medieval brick (indented border, T39mm/B133/T39mm) , Medieval brick (indented border, signature/tally, B132mm/T38mm), Medieval brick (indented border, B136/T42mm), Imbrex, Medieval brick (T36mm), Medieval brick (T35mm). Lots of half bricks, some may join.	14th-15th
1020	Plain, Daub, ?Flanged/Tegula	13th+
1021	Roman brick (T56, overfired, finger-keyed)	Roman
1026	?Paving slab, Roman brick, Circular pila, Slate	?Roman
2002	Brick (L233/B117/T68mm, very burnt -?vitrified - header, heel of shoe impression, 'turning-off' mark), Brick (L225/B114/T65mm, Vitrified header, slop moulded, v similar to above)	18th-19th
2003	Brick (L236/B115/T68mm, slop moulded)	18th-19th
2004	Brick (L240/B113/T77, ?slip, overfired, slop moulded)	19th
2008	Plain, Medieval brick	14th-15th
2010	Plain, Plain (+slip), Medieval brick (T45mm) Brick	16th+
2011	Plain	13th+
2015	Plain	13th+
2019	Medieval brick, Plain	14th-15th
2021	Plain, Plain (+slip), Plain (reused), ?Medieval brick, Medieval brick (+slip)	14th-15th

2023	Medieval brick (T43mm), Plain, Plain (+slip), Ridge/curved	14th-15th
2026	Plain, Medieval brick, Medieval brick (T37mm), Mortar (?moulded), Plain (+slip), Peg, Ridge, Flanged, Plain (overfired, 14th)	14th-15th
2027	Plain, Medieval bricks (T33mm, T38mm, T40mm), Medieval brick (+indented border), Medieval brick (+reused)	14th-15th
2028	Plain, Plain (+slip, badly made, ?finger painted)	13th+
2029	Plain, Plain (+slip)	13th+
2030	Plain (+slip), Plain	13th+
3000	Plain, Medieval brick	14th-15th
3001	Curved/ridge, Plain, Plain (14th)	14th+
3003	Plain	13th+
3006	Plain	13th+
3007	Plain, Imbrex	13th+
3010	Medieval brick (T43, B123mm), Plain (+slip), Ridge	14th-15th
3012	Plain, Micaceous sandstone	13th+
3032	Roman brick	Roman

7. CONCLUSIONS

The excavations have shown that beneath the modern tarmac surface of the car-park and the playground of the former St. George's School, deep stratified archaeological deposits survive towards the east of the proposed development and that along the George Street frontage shallow modern deposits seal the natural geology into which the truncated remnants of early archaeological features were cut. No waterlogged deposits were encountered although these could survive, along with other important archaeological remains, at depths beneath the 1.5m limit set on the evaluation trenches.

7.1 Prehistoric and Romano-British (up to 5th century AD).

The evidence for Roman occupation of the site comes from the George Street frontage where a stratified sequence of events was recovered within Trench 1. The earliest activity involved the excavation of a shallow curvilinear gully on the eastern side of the trench. This may have been a drip gully for a circular structure or building, a drainage channel, or a simple boundary between fields, animal enclosures or working areas within a Roman settlement on the east side of the River Foss. This was then backfilled, including fragments of hypocaust and tegula (roofing tile) which may indicate the presence of a substantial Roman building close by. A second gully or ditch was then excavated, possibly indicating a change of use or ownership within the area. A number of ephemeral stake-holes and other features may also relate to Roman or later agricultural activity on the site, but they were extremely difficult to date and no spatial patterns or alignments could be discerned in plan.

7.2 Anglian and Anglo-Scandinavian (5th-11th centuries).

No evidence for Anglian or Anglo-Scandinavian activity was recovered from any of the three trenches.

7.3 Medieval (11th-16th centuries).

Medieval deposits were recorded within all three evaluation trenches. The earliest of these deposits were recovered from Trench 3, were dated to the 11th century and were interpreted as dumps and build-ups of domestic and construction waste, within a large landscape feature. This may have been a shallow valley or large ditch aligned north-south across the site and may be the King's Drain recorded on the 1852 OS Map. It may even have been the reason for the position of the medieval parish boundary between the parishes of St. George and St. Margaret. Within Trenches two and three, the deposits followed a similar sequence of thick dumps and levelling deposits of homogenous material, containing domestic refuse and waste construction debris probably utilised to backfill the large landscape feature and raise and level the ground surface in yards behind properties fronting onto George Street (medieval Nowtgail) and Walmgate. This was interspersed with periods when pits and shallow scoops were excavated into the newly raised ground level for the disposal of similar accumulated waste materials. Later dumps and layers were probably the result of further attempts to raise the ground level and to stabilise the ground as earlier dumps subsided. Within Trench 1 a possible late medieval yard fronting onto George Street was identified and this contained a stack of broken 15th century bricks. These have been interpreted as either a

pile of construction materials which had sunk under their own weight into the earlier Roman deposits or the post-pad for a timber framed structure. The former is the favoured interpretation and may indicate the presence of a late medieval builders, or brick makers yard in the area. The only other structural evidence from these stratified sequences was from Trench 3 where two possible beam slots were recovered near the top of the medieval sequence.

7.4 Post-Medieval (16th-18th centuries).

In Trenches 2 and 3 dumping activity to raise the ground level and periodic pit excavation continued with possible later utilisation of the whole area for horticulture and gardens.

7.5 Modern (19th and 20th centuries).

The ground was cleared in all three trenches for the construction of Victorian terraced houses on the east side of George Street, the north side of Peel Street and on the south side of Chapel Row and for the construction of St. George's School. Evidence was also found for the insertion of a toilet block on the Margaret Street frontage for the use of the school pupils and for a foul water drainage system also probably associated with the school in Trench 2. The terraces were demolished in the 1950's, and the area used as the playground for the school. Following the schools closure in the mid 1980's the former playground was used as a public car-park.

8. ARCHAEOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

The excavations have revealed evidence for settlement within the area from the Roman (1st to 5th centuries) and the medieval and post-medieval periods (11th to 17th centuries).

Archaeological deposits dating to the Roman period were found to be relatively shallow on the George Street frontage and were cut into the natural geology at 11.43m AOD, c.0.70m below the surface. Elsewhere deep, stratified deposits, perhaps levelling a large landscape feature, were discovered and these were at 0.92m below the surface (10.46m AOD) in Trench 2, and 1.15m (11.15m AOD) in Trench 3. The latter two trenches produced dumping and levelling deposits interspersed with periods of pit digging dating from the 11th to the 17th centuries, The pits contained domestic and construction waste of mixed quality which suggested that many of the deposits, especially the stratigraphically later ones, contained reworked material from earlier contexts or from elsewhere in the area. Trench 2 suggests that the deepest deposits, at the base limit of 1.5m, were late medieval in character dating from the 14th to the 15th centuries whereas hand excavated deposits at the base of Trench 3, suggest that 11th to 12th century deposits were reached.

The investigation has therefore demonstrated that, in the areas where the new foundations are planned, archaeological deposits will be most vulnerable on the George Street frontage where stratified Roman deposits were located. Elsewhere, between a depth of 1.0m to 1.5m, medieval and post-medieval dump deposits of limited archaeological value will be encountered. Below the 1.5m depth limit which was specified for the trench excavations, further important stratified

archaeological deposits may survive. Plans for groundworks below the level of 1.5m should take this possibility into consideration.

It is suggested that, on the George Street frontage, archaeological excavation of the shallow deposits might be both the most cost-effective and archaeologically sensitive solution. Elsewhere on the site a watching brief should be carried out if disturbance can be contained within the evaluated depth of 1.5m. If large scale disturbance below this level is proposed, further archaeological investigation should be carried out prior to development so that a suitable mitigation strategy can be devised.

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