



# YORK ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST



## 62-68 LOW PETERGATE, YORK

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# YORK ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST



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## **ABOUT THIS PDF**

In 2004-5 York Archaeological Trust undertook excavations at 62-68 Low Petergate, York. The excavations uncovered remains of medieval to modern date.

This Pdf represents a copy of a report which was designed as an interactive web report, originally hosted on York Archaeological Trust's website. Due to changes in the design of this website the original interactive report is no longer available. This Pdf was produced to ensure that the information held in the original report remained widely available.

As the original report was intended for web-viewing the design did not follow conventional publication formats, there were therefore some problems when converting the web information into this Pdf. For instance, the figures which were perfectly clear when viewed on the web became slightly blurred when transferred into Pdf format. There were no Figure or Plate numbers originally, as the images in question were simply embedded in the web-text at the relevant point; the images have therefore been placed as close to their original position as possible within the Pdf. This Pdf follows the layout of the original web report as far as possible, though a more formal structure had to be imposed, with headings and sub headings etc. Readers should bear these limitations in mind while reading the report.

The conversion of the original IADB report into a Pdf file was undertaken by J. M. McComish in July 2018.

The discoveries at 62-68 Low Petergate, one of the most significant excavations to occur in York in recent years, are of considerable value for research into urban life and industry in medieval York.



Medieval and post-medieval buildings and industrial structures were found in the four tenements excavated at the rear of the properties. A complex sequence of medieval workshop buildings dating from the 13th-15th centuries was uncovered. Within them were hearths, furnaces, and other features related to the metal working industry. Pits were found outside the workshops that contained domestic and industrial waste discarded by those who lived and worked in the tenements on Low Petergate. In addition to the evidence for metal working there was evidence from pit fills of leather and horn working, including a number of well-preserved, highly decorated leather knife sheaths.

The large quantity of outstanding finds and environmental samples recovered provides valuable insight into the domestic lives of the people living and working amongst these industries.

The medieval deposits were overlain by post-medieval building foundations and associated culverts, yards and paths. There are scarce opportunities to excavate post-medieval buildings within the City centre, so the excavation at 62-68 Low Petergate has additional significance due to the continuity between the medieval and post-medieval archaeology.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

By Ben Reeves

The redevelopment of the former York College for Girls, 62-68 Low Petergate (NGR SE60395204), in 2004-5 brought a new lease of life to a neglected group of buildings with a very long and interesting history. The restoration of the old buildings, parts of which date from the 15th century, was undertaken by George Houlton and Sons Ltd. and was combined with the construction of a new block of apartments between the old school buildings and the churchyard of Holy Trinity Goodramgate.

The archaeological excavation was funded by George Houlton and Son Ltd and was carried out by York Archaeological Trust (YAT) between March and July 2004. The area excavated was within the 'footprint' of the new apartment building, in an area behind 64 and 66 Low Petergate. The main objectives were the mitigation of disturbance to the archaeological remains during preparation of the foundations, and the recovery of archaeological evidence for the medieval and later use of the site. The work was carried out to the specification by the City of York Council Archaeologist John Oxley. Excavation was continued down to a depth of 16.05m OD within the 'footprint' of the new building and to a greater depth in places where additional trenches were dug.

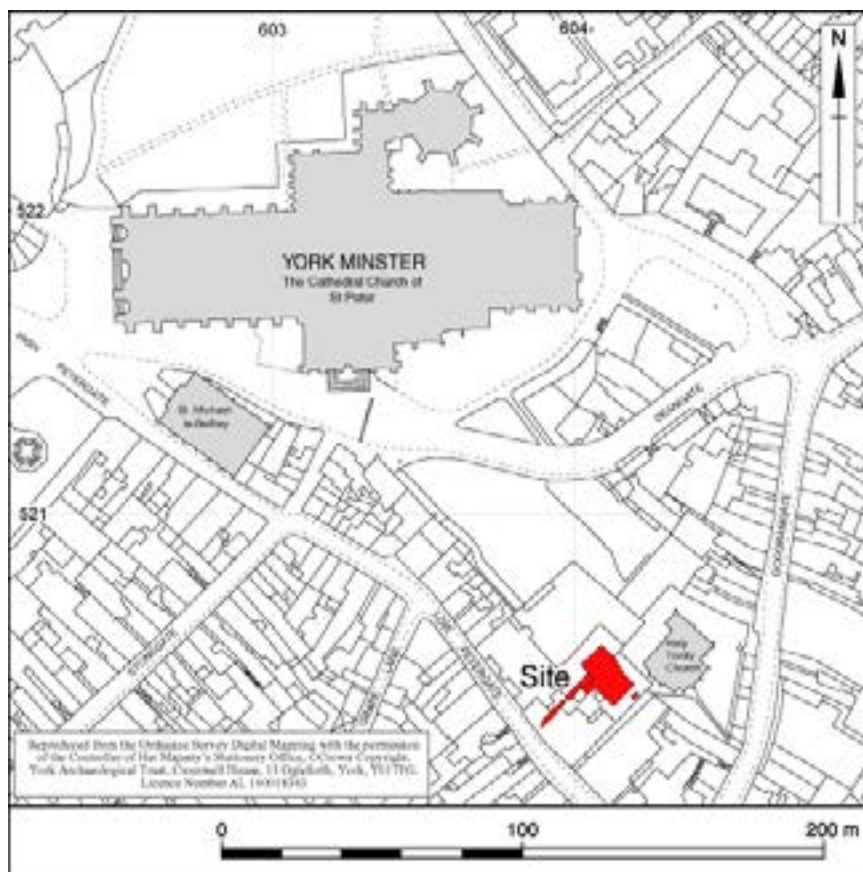
The excavation was carried out under somewhat adverse conditions whilst demolition and building works were ongoing in the properties fronting on to Low Petergate, but due to the patient assistance of the contractor and their site staff, the programme of excavation and building recording progressed steadily. A mechanical digger was used to remove modern overburden, after which targeted excavation was continued by hand to focus on areas of particular archaeological significance. Previous interventions on the site in 1957-8 (Wenham 1972) and 2003 (Johnson 2003) had shown that there was evidence for horn, leather and metal working industry on the site, that waterlogged remains might be encountered and that there were surviving remains of both medieval and post-medieval buildings.

Eight additional trenches were excavated in order to sample deposits in peripheral areas of the site, to target specific structural remains and for services to the new buildings.

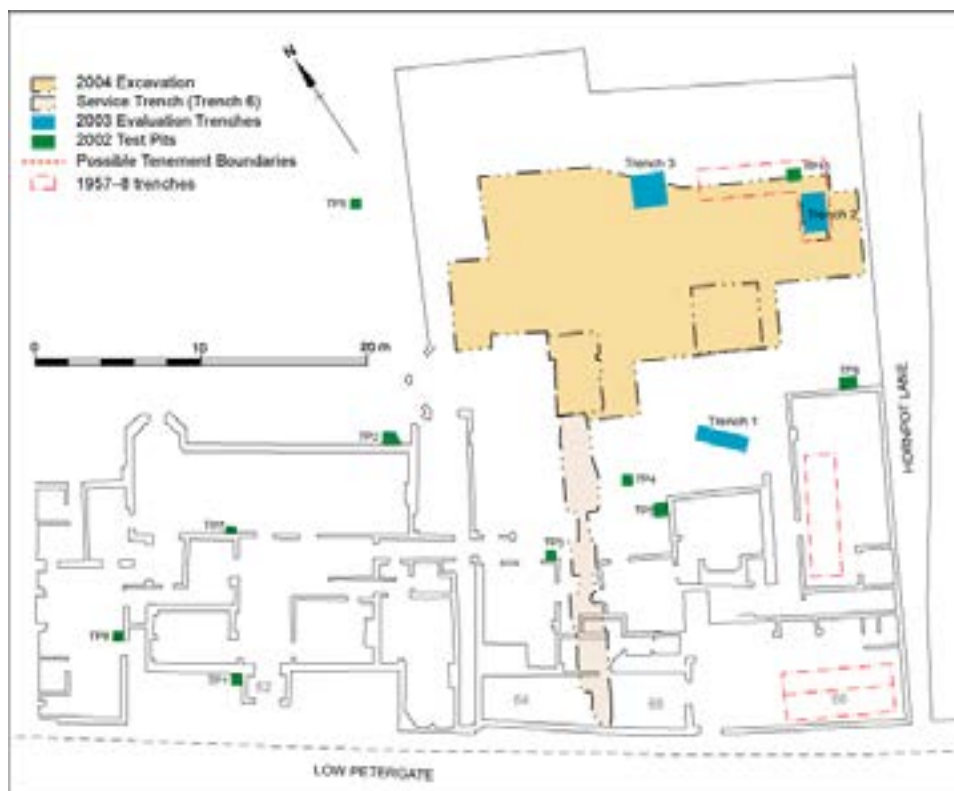
Building recording was carried out in May 2004. The timber framed structures were the principal focus of the building recording, with a photographic record of later buildings or features where necessary. The objective of the building survey was to record and interpret previously unseen detail exposed during the renovation work to enhance previous work undertaken by the Royal Commission on Historical Monuments (RCHM) before the partial demolition of some of the structures in the late 1950s.



Low Petergate in the late 19th century, looking north-west towards the Minster, by an unknown photographer



Site location



Trench location



## 2 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

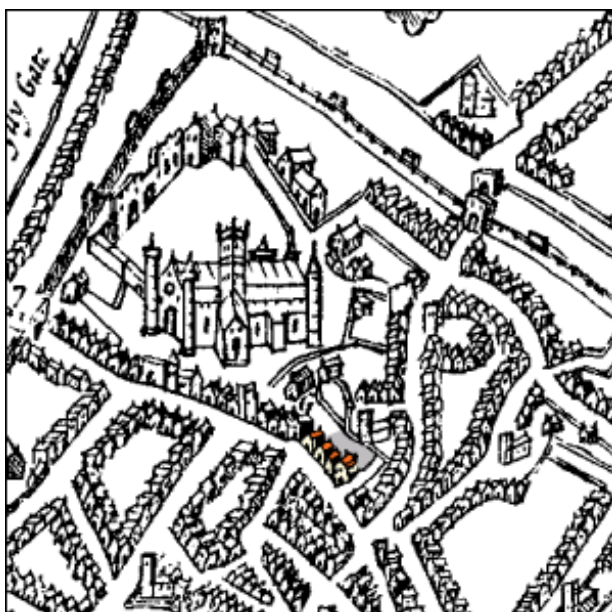
By Patrick Ottaway

The excavation at 62-68 Low Petergate was undertaken because the site lies in the centre of the Roman fortress and the medieval walled city north-east of the Ouse, and also in an area known to be rich in archaeological remains. This was demonstrated in 1957-8 by an excavation on the south-east side of the site (Wenham 1972) and in an evaluation excavation in 2003 (Johnson 2003). The archaeological deposits in this part of York are known to be up to c. 5m deep and in view of the depth of the footprint of the new development it was clear that only medieval deposits would be the subject of the mitigation exercise.

The street name, Petergate, is taken from St. Peter's Minster, and was first recorded in 1203. Although the distinction between High and Low Petergate was used in 1736, it was not common until around 1800 (RCHMY 5, 180). Hornpot Lane marks the south-eastern boundary of this site and leads from Low Petergate to the church and churchyard of Holy Trinity, Goodramgate. This lane seems to be medieval in origin and its name is thought to derive from the horners who worked in the vicinity in the late medieval period.

There are numerous historical buildings in the immediate area including the church of Holy Trinity Goodramgate situated on the north-east side of the property. The earliest references to it are from the 11th century, although most of the surviving fabric dates from the 13th-15th centuries (Wilson and Mee 1998, 39). Petergate itself contains some buildings with surviving medieval timber-framing. For example, No. 67 dates from the late 14th century. It is three storeys with the upper storeys jettied onto the street (RCHMY 5, 194). No. 79 is also three storeys and jettied, it thought to have been built in the late 14th century (*ibid.*, 196).

Nos 62-68 Low Petergate have previously been studied by the RCHME (RCHMY 5, 189-192). In this survey the only extant medieval framing was thought to be visible in No. 66, formerly the Fox Inn, which was built in the second half of the 15th century. Also recognised as medieval were the principal posts on the south-west side of No. 64.



Detail of a map by John Speed, 1610, showing location of 62-68 Low Petergate



The front block of the property known as the Fox Inn was demolished in 1957. However, prior to its demolition it was surveyed by RCHME (1963, 72). It was concluded that this building was originally built in the 15th century of four unjettied storeys with its gable facing the street. At the rear was a two-storied block containing a first-floor hall, and a further 17th-century extension beyond it. The hall was found to have been divided into two floors in c.1600, and a fireplace was inserted in the early 17th century. The street front was rebuilt in the early 18th century and further additions were undertaken throughout the 19th century.

The buildings on Low Petergate are largely post-medieval in date. The majority of the timber-framed buildings on the street were remodelled in the 16th or 17th century. RCHME (RCHMY 5, 191) recognised that No. 64 consisted of part of the property occupied by the Talbots in the 16th century, becoming the Talbot Inn in the 17th century. The south-east wing contains a large staircase, known as the 'Talbot Stairs' dating from the mid-late 17th century. This is the wing mentioned above as containing the 15th century principal posts. The north-west wing of this property was described as being of 17th century origin, though heavily restored in the 18th and 19th century.



South-east Prospect of York by Samuel and Nathaniel Buck, 1700-50

There is also a collection of brick buildings dating from the 18th or 19th century found on Low Petergate, of which No. 62 is arguably the finest. It was built c. 1725 by John Shaw, Proctor of the Court of York, and is thought to have replaced part of the Talbot Inn (*ibid.*, 189). It is a large Georgian building set back from the street with two projecting wings. The single storied projecting porch with Roman Doric columns was added in 1865-6 at the same time as the rear elevation was reconstructed with its corner turrets (Pevsner and Neave 1997).

The two previous excavations on the site by Wenham and Johnson indicated the presence of a long sequence of deposits and structures from the Anglo-Scandinavian period to the post-medieval. Finds of leather, largely off-cuts, suggests cobblers or leatherworkers were based here in the medieval period. There was also evidence for metalworking and horn working as implied by the name Hornpot Lane. The quality of preservation in the archaeological deposits in this area was known to be particularly good with waterlogged deposits preserving organic material.

### 3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

By Ben Reeves

#### 3.1 Hornpot Lane

The origin of the name Hornpot Lane has been the object of speculation for some time. The first known written example of the name, as 'Hornepottelane', was written in 1295 (Palliser 1978, 11).

Before Wenham's excavation others, such as Lindkvist, Smith and Raine, had attempted to uncover the origin of the name. They tentatively associated it with horn working, and suggested horn-pot meant 'drinking horn' or 'cup' (Wenham 1964, 28).

In an article for the Yorkshire Philosophical Society in 1964 Wenham suggested a plausible explanation. Having simply looked up the word 'pot' in the Oxford English Dictionary he found that the word has a particular use in Northern English, especially in areas where there was a strong Scandinavian linguistic influence, to mean 'a deep hole or pit dug in the ground, a tan pit...'



Hornpot Lane in the early 1900s, looking towards Holy Trinity Church.

(Photographer unknown. Reproduced courtesy of City of York Council from [ImagineYork.co.uk](http://ImagineYork.co.uk))

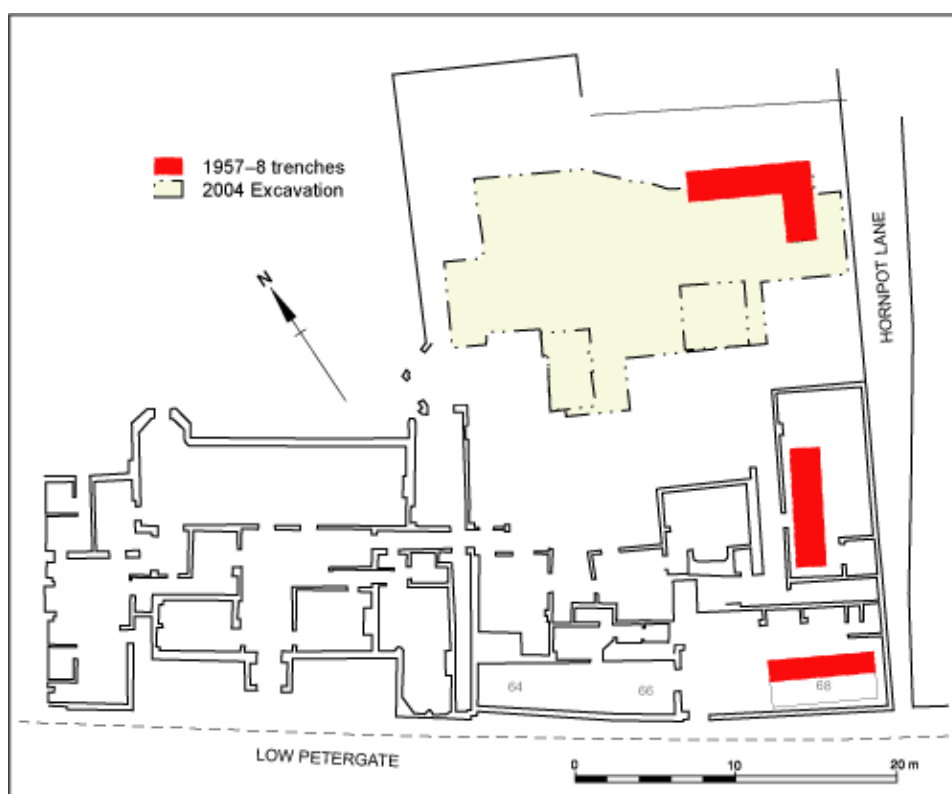
On the basis of his discovery of what he interpreted as a horners' retting pit during the 1957-8 excavation (Wenham 1964, 28), Wenham believed that its origin lay in the Northern English

use of the word pot to mean 'pit, or tan pit' and that it combined reference to the horners and their retting pits (pots).

Dr. Sarah Rees Jones (Rees Jones 1987) has added to this that the etymology of Hornpot Lane may combine references to both the horn workers (horners) and the metal workers (potters), who also worked in the area. Medieval metal-workers were known by many names depending on the types of objects they made and the metals they worked with. The York Freeman's Roll, 1272-1671 (Collins 1897) lists metal-workers as blacksmiths, horsmarshals, founders, goldsmiths, founders, bladesmyths, cutlers and armorers, among numerous other names. In the medieval period one group of metalworkers were known as potters, a name probably derived from the manufacture of clay moulds made for casting, or possibly from the production of domestic cooking pots.

### 3.2 1957-68 Excavations by Peter Wenham

In 1957-8 three trenches were dug by the noted York historian and avocational archaeologist Peter Wenham, before the construction of a new school building on the site of recently demolished Fox Inn, which at that time, prior to re-numbering of the street, was 65 and 66 Low Petergate and is now 68 Low Petergate. His three trenches were located below and behind the present 68 Low Petergate. The excavation was carried out by students from St. John's College, pupils from York College for Girls, members of the York Excavation Committee, volunteers, and by excavators paid by the Ministry of Works (fore-runner of English Heritage) (Wenham 1972, 65).



Location of trenches excavated by Peter Wenham in relation to modern buildings and 2004 excavation

Wenham identified both Roman and medieval structures. He identified four phases of Roman buildings, one of wood and three of stone (Wenham 1972, 65). Post holes and a brick oven-base or hearth were the only surviving evidence for the earliest, probably first century,

structures. The later structures dated from the second to the fourth centuries and comprised limestone rubble, cobble and opus signinum wall foundations and floors (Wenham 1972, 88).

Wenham's team also found the limestone and rubble foundations of an Anglo-Norman building constructed on timber piles and sill beams. Overlying the remains of the building foundations there was a thick layer of what Wenham described as 'domestic rubbish'.

In about 1300 wooden piles were driven into the deposits for the foundations of a building constructed in 1300-1350; which is almost certainly to be equated with structures found during the 2004 excavation. Wenham associated this structure with deposits containing quantities of horn cores and part of a lined retting pit for soaking horn, which led him to interpret this as the site of a horner's workshop.

A second later medieval building was identified, associated with two clay lined furnaces or hearths used for bronze working, in the north-eastern part of the site. The foundations were made from cobbles in a U-sectioned foundation trench and were interpreted as the footings of a possible 14th or 15th century building.

The latest medieval building which he recorded was built around the middle of the 15th century and comprised massive stone walls built of roughly shaped, irregular blocks of magnesian limestone. Parts of this building had survived, incorporated into the York College for Girls. This building was recorded by the RCHM before its partial demolition in advance of the extension of the York College for Girls.

### 3.3 W.A. Pantin

The demolition in 1957 of the majority of 68 Low Petergate, formerly the Fox Inn, to make way for a new school building was a great loss. However, the building made a significant posthumous contribution to the development of our understanding of medieval town houses.

W. A. Pantin used the building as an example in what was the first major typological study of English medieval urban houses along with forty other buildings from seventeen other English towns (Pantin 1962-3, 202-39; Grenville 1997, 165). The 15th-century building had four stories and was most probably jettied like the buildings opposite on Low Petergate. It was notable for its unusual first floor hall, built at a right angle to the street. This configuration was adopted to allow a respectable sized hall to be created within the narrow urban tenement. Pantin categorised this form of building as the 'narrow plan, right angle' type.

### 3.4 Previous YAT excavations

In January 2002 York Archaeological Trust carried out a watching brief during the excavation of ten test pits, dug by employees of George Houlton and Sons Ltd, in order to investigate the foundations of the buildings at 62-68 Low Petergate. Most of the test pits were dug in and around the buildings, except one which was dug in the basement. A probable medieval sill wall and dump deposit were found. Otherwise the majority of what was recorded related to the construction of the Georgian (18th century) foundations or was modern. A test pit dug at the rear of the property showed that the ground level there had been raised by 0.85m. since the 18th century (Hunter-Mann 2002, 19), an interpretation that was later confirmed when the former playground area behind 62 Low Petergate was stripped by machine.

In 2003 York Archaeological Trust excavated three small evaluation trenches at the rear of 68 Low Petergate in order to assess the nature of archaeological deposits at the site. The depth

and type of archaeological deposits has implications for development on a site such as this in the centre of York. Evaluation excavation allows mitigation of damage to the archaeology to be pre-planned and provides valuable information to guide further archaeological work.

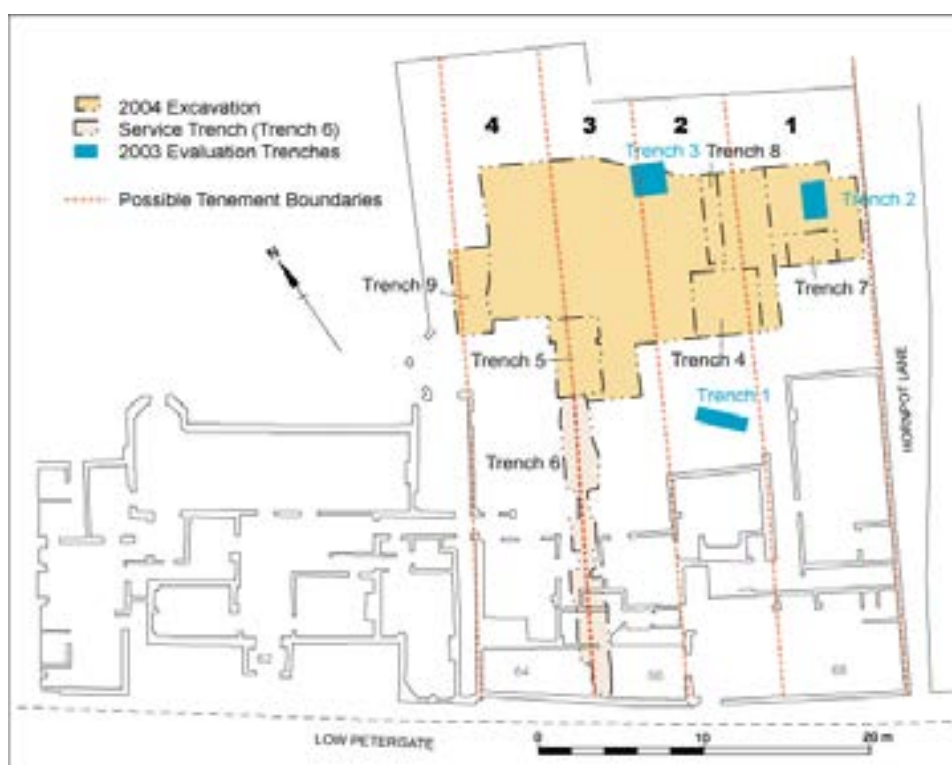
Trench 1 was placed near to the remaining standing part of the former Fox Inn; Trench 2 re-examined one of Wenham's trenches near to Hornpot Lane; and Trench 3 was dug near to the churchyard of Holy Trinity, Goodramgate.

The large quantities of mould fragments and slag that were found in all three trenches indicated that there had been metal-working on the site. Leather off-cuts indicated the possibility that there had also been leather working. The upper deposits were found mainly to be made up of post-medieval and modern overburden. The excavation indicated that there were waterlogged deposits at 1-2m. below the present ground surface.

## 4 THE ARCHAEOLOGY

### 4.1 Methodology

The excavation area



The site at 62-68 Low Petergate, covered five known tenements which have their origins in the medieval period and have survived into recent times. There were two main areas to the site; the hand excavated main area of excavation, at the south-east end of the site and at the rear of 64-68 Low Petergate; and an area to the north-west behind No. 62 Low Petergate which was, subject to watching brief conditions, machine excavated under supervision. Archaeological interventions were carried out by a team of York Archaeological Trust (YAT) archaeologists in both areas to criteria set out in the archaeological specification by City of York Council.

Additional and investigative trenches

Three trenches were necessary in addition to the main excavation, two for an electricity substation and service trench and one for a lift pit. Within the main excavation area three investigative trenches were dug in order to sample deposits in areas where minimal excavation was deemed necessary. The 2004 trenches were therefore numbered 4-9, in order to distinguish them from trenches 1-3 from the 2003 excavation.

## 4.2 Tenements

The results of the excavation have been phased on a tenemental basis in order to show successive activities or building phases within the four tenements where possible.

### 4.2.1 Tenement 1

Phase 1.1 (equal to 2.1 in Tenement 2) and 1.2, dumps and pits and dump deposits.

The earliest deposits identified in Tenement 1 comprised a series of dumps and pit fills overlain by a clay floor. In Phase 1.1 there was a series of inter-cut pits, containing dark organic cessy deposits. Due to waterlogging they contained well preserved leather and wood fragments. The presence of a clay floor above the pit backfills suggests that a building stood in Tenement 1 at this level, but no other structural remains were found.

Phase 1.2 comprised deposits of overburden above the clay floor in Phase 1.1, derived from a period of pit digging and dumping.

Phase 1.3 (Building 1.3) and Phase 1.4 build-up and dumps



General site view looking north-west

In Phase 1.3 a large building (Building 1.3) was constructed in Tenement 1. In Trench 4 the remains comprised a large cluster of nine piles driven into the ground; it was sub-circular in plan and c. 0.9m. in diameter. To either side of the pile cluster there was a sill beam. Together they measured more than 4m in length aligned north-east / south-west, and were laid upon a foundation of small cobbles.



Dendrochronological analysis of one of the pile timbers and of a wooden block used for levelling off the top of the piles yielded estimated felling dates of c. AD 1239 and AD 1220-1256 respectively.

This configuration of timber pile cluster and sill-beams was very similar to that in another structure identified in Tenement 1 during the 1957-8 excavations (Wenham 1972), for which Wenham suggested a construction date of around 1300. The sill beams found in the 2004 excavation were parallel, and at a comparable level, to those identified by Wenham. It is very likely that Building 1.3 was associated with the structure recorded in 1957.

During the 14th century Building 1.3 went out of use and was demolished, its timbers probably removed and re-used elsewhere for new buildings. The remains of the foundations were buried under accumulated layers of waste dumped in the backyard of Tenement 1 (Phase 1.4) and were all that was left of the structure.



Plan of timbers forming Building 1.3

#### Phase 1.5 (Building 1.5) and Phase 1.6 levelling and dump deposits

A new building (Building 1.5) was constructed in Phase 1.5. It had a foundation made from piles aligned in two rows, one north-east / south west along the south-east edge of the sill beams of Building 1.3 (Phase 1.3); the other parallel to this and c.1m further to the south-east. The relationship between the two rows of piles is uncertain. The level of the top of the piles and their alignment indicates they were related, however the distance between the two rows suggests they were probably not one foundation. In between the piles there were pieces of wood, probably discarded during the building activity.



Building 1.5 subsequently went out of use and in Phase 1.6 a series of levelling or dump deposits accumulated, burying the remains of Building 1.5. They included what appeared to be either a fence or part of a timber structure (*right*) that had fallen flat on an old ground surface. This was subsequently covered by a succession of dumping and levelling deposits, indicating that during Phase 1.6 this part of Tenement 1 was not occupied by buildings

Phase 1.7 (Building 1.7) and Phase 1.8 (Building 1.8) Phase 1.9 pit fills and overburden

In Phase 1.7 a new building was constructed on an alignment of eleven piles ranging from 0.23-0.92m. in length and c.0.12m. in diameter. The timbers used were a combination of square-cut timbers, re-used parts of timber framing and roundwood timbers driven into deposits below, and formed a distinct alignment running north-east / south-west along the north-west edge of Tenement 1.

In the north-eastern part of the Trench 4 there was a single post-pad (Phase 1.8). This solitary post pad is thought to represent the latest phase of medieval building in Tenements 1 and 2. As with the other buildings examined in Trench 4 the true extent of the structure remains unknown. The stratigraphic relationship of deposits between Buildings 1.7 and 1.8 indicate that Building 1.8 was later, but the two could be contemporary as the scant remains of the latter make analysis difficult.

In Phase 1.9 a series of pits were dug and layers of backyard overburden accumulated, both within Trench 4 and in an area excavated closer to Hornpot Lane. In the area near to Hornpot Lane were five small, oval and sub-circular pits measuring c. 0.6 - 1m. in diameter, which contained quantities of fish and animal bone. These layers and pit fills were typical back-yard deposits and contained domestic refuse discarded by the inhabitants of Low Petergate and Hornpot lane. Excavation did not continue to a point where it was possible to ascertain the full depth of the deposits near to Hornpot Lane; in places they were more than 0.5m in depth.

#### Phase 1.10, Hornpot Lane boundary wall

Meanwhile, in Phase 1.10, a substantial wall was built along the edge of the site, parallel to Hornpot Lane. The foundation comprised a deep trench cut into deposits of Phase 1.9, filled with cobbles, on top of which there were courses of large, roughly squared limestone blocks. The brick wall above was a patchwork of 18th -20th century construction in which several filled in doors and windows were visible. However during excavation the foundation below was found to be much older and probably related to an earlier wall or buildings that fronted on to Hornpot Lane.



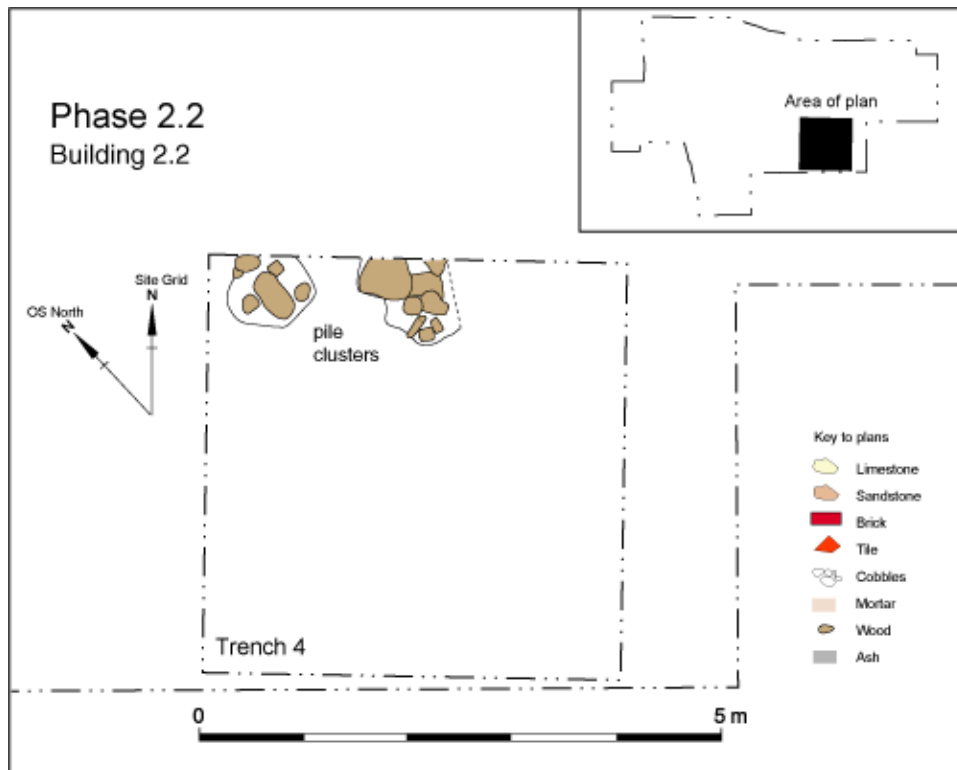
Boundary wall of Hornpot Lane looking towards Holy Trinity Church

#### 4.2.2 *Tenement 2, at the rear of 66 Low Petergate*

##### Phases 2.1 and 2.2, Building 2.2

The earliest activity in Tenement 2 (Phase 2.1), as in Tenement 1 (Phase 1.1), was pit digging and dumping. At this time the division between the two tenements is unclear and the two may have been jointly occupied.

In Phase 2.2 a building was erected upon a foundation of large pile clusters. Evidence for Building 2.2 consisted of two pile clusters in the north corner of Trench 4, up to 1m. wide and c. 0.4m. apart. A deep packing deposit of small and medium rounded grey cobbles was found on top of each of the clusters. Protruding from the cobble packing there were several other posts, each measuring between 0.06m. and 0.68m. in length. These may have been used for additional strengthening or stability within the cobble packing.



Plan of pile clusters belonging to Building 2.2



Pile clusters belonging to Building 2.2

All but one of the timbers, which was a re-used structural timber, were roundwood piles. None of the timbers in Phase 2.2 was suitable for scientific dating. However Building 2.2 could be contemporary with Building 1.3 in Tenement 1 and would therefore have been built around 1250-1300. No other structural elements were found within Trench 4 but the greater part of the building may have been situated to the north-east of Trench 4.





Pile clusters belonging to Building 2.2

Phases 2.3, 2.4, 2.5, 2.6 post-holes, piles and pit fills

Building 2.2 went out of use and the remains were covered by a series of dump deposits and pits (Phase 2.3). Two deep cess-pits were found on the north-west side of Trench 4, one of which was more than 2.6m. wide. Within these pits there had been several episodes of use interspersed with occasional re-cutting. The fills contained well-preserved organic material and both domestic and industrial waste including metalworking slag, bone off-cuts and leather off-cuts. These pits indicate continuing occupation activity on the plot, albeit with the centre of activity and any structures beyond the limits of the excavation.



Cess-pit in Tenement 2

Phase 2.4 consisted of a collection of structural elements that may have formed part of a building foundation. The remains consisted of four stake-holes, with no discernable alignment, and a pile c. 0.15m. long, as well as two post holes, both sub-rectangular in plan, c. 0.17m. wide and 0.15m. deep, each containing a decayed post. These were clearly part of a structural phase but the nature of that structure remains unknown.

A period of pit digging followed (Phase 2.5), during which this part of Tenement 2 was used for the disposal of domestic waste; evidence for this was found in Trenches 4 and 8. At the north-west side of Trench 4 there was a well-built cess-pit, lined with re-used roof tile, and semi-circular in plan. There were several cessy fills within the pit.

In Trench 8 a small patch of cobble floor was uncovered, overlain by occupation deposits consisting of very dark grey and brown silty clays that contained fired clay mould fragments and charcoal, derived from metalworking. These, in turn, were cut through by large late medieval pits on the north-west and south-east sides, and overlain by late medieval overburden and dump deposits. At the north-east end of the trench the south-western edge of Wenham's Trench 3a (Wenham 1972, 66) was found.

In Trench 4 (Phase 2.6) there were six backfilled post-holes, some of which contained packing material, forming an irregular north-west / south-east alignment. They were 0.14 - 0.2m. in diameter, and up to 0.39m. in depth. These post-holes probably relate to a building aligned with Low Petergate, but otherwise the size and nature of the building are unknown. Pottery from the fills and overlying deposits indicate the structure went out of use in the mid to late 15th century.

#### Phase 2.7, cobble-lined cess pit

Finally, in Phase 2.7 a large and impressive cess-pit was dug and lined with cobbles. It was rectangular in plan, measuring 1.4m. north-west / south-east x 1.7m. north-east / south-west. It had a brick-built arched inlet built into the south-west lining wall. Cessy deposits were found tipping into the lined pit from the arched inlet. It would be reasonable to assume that 'deposits' entered the pit through a chute leading to the arched inlet from a garderobe within a building on the Low Petergate side of the pit.



Cobble-lined cess-pit





Paul Major excavates cobble-lined cess pit with arched inlet.

#### 4.2.3 *Tenement 3 Behind 66 Low Petergate*

##### Phase 3.1

The earliest layers in Tenement 3 were a series of occupation, dump and levelling deposits, derived from nearby metalworking activity (Phase 3.1). These were characteristically mottled purple, orange and red in colour, and a mixture of silty sand, ashy clay, or sandy clay, with varying levels of charcoal content. The colouration indicates that they had probably been subjected to intense heat, either in situ or prior to deposition.

Phase 3.2 (Building 3.2), 3.3, 3.4 = Phase 4.7

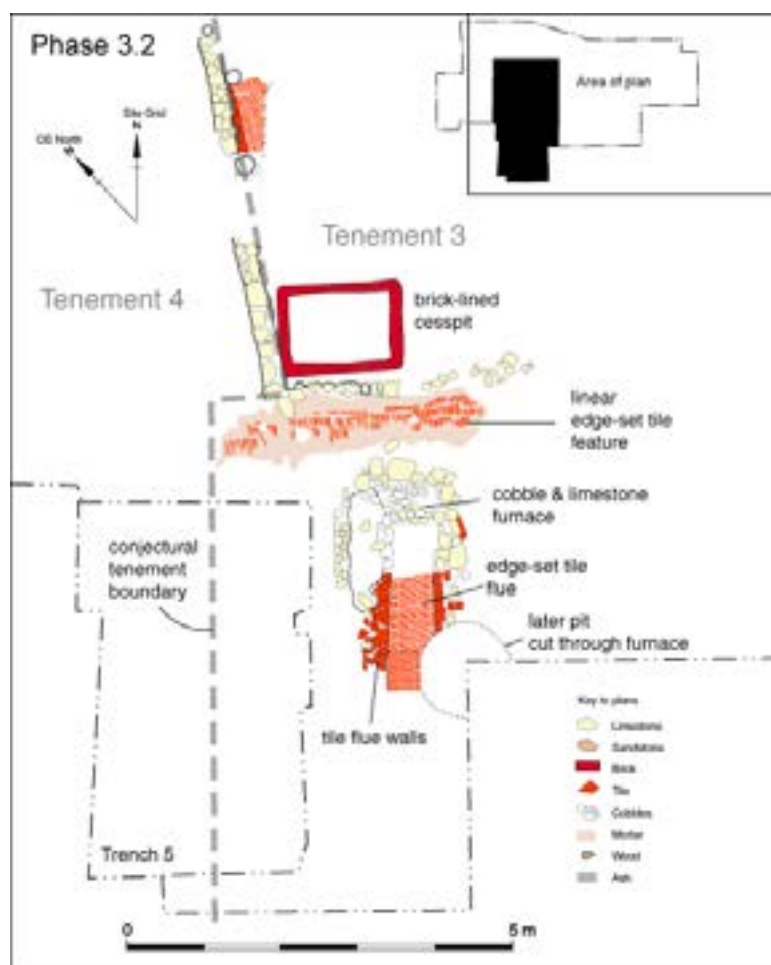
##### *The building*

Building 3.2 comprised a foundation for a timber sill (Phase 3.2) aligned parallel to Low Petergate and butting up to the south-east wall of Building 4.7 (Phase 4.7). The foundations were c. 3.3m. long and 0.3m. wide, and made from limestone and brick fragments. The foundation formed the north-east wall of a building or enclosure (Building 3.2), within which a series of furnaces were built.

##### *The features*

Within Building 3.2 there were two curious metal-working related features. One of these was a long narrow surface made from edge-set tiles, constructed against the north-east wall of Building 3.2. It was aligned parallel to Petergate, measured 3.3m in length and 0.4m in width and appeared to have been built at ground level. The use of tile fragments, typically used in the construction of medieval hearths in York, indicates that the surface needed to withstand high temperatures. This low level was presumably the safest working height for handling

dangerous materials. A possible interpretation is that this surface was used to stand moulds whilst they cooled, having been filled with molten metal from the nearby furnaces.



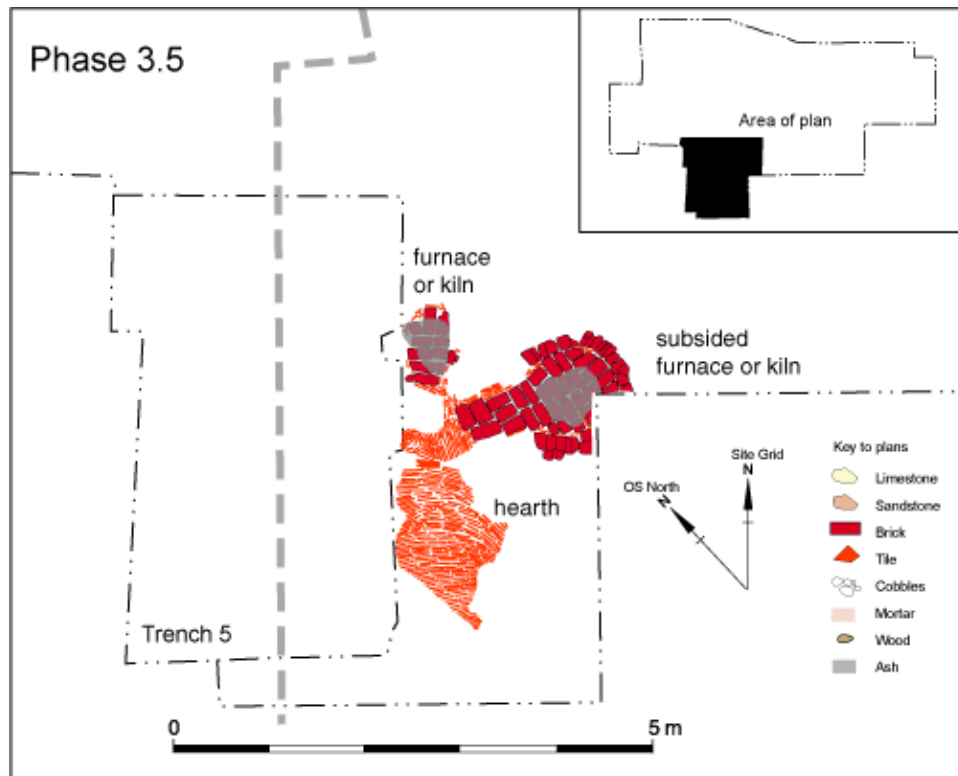
Isabel Mason and Katie Tucker excavating edge-set tile feature

### Phases 3.5 and 3.6, furnaces and hearth

A second complex of industrial furnaces or kilns was found along with a substantial tile hearth (Phase 3.5) overlying the levelling deposits in Phase 3.4.

The hearth covered an irregular area c. 2.6m. long and 1.2m. wide. At its north-east end (the end furthest from Low Petergate) there were two brick and tile furnaces or kilns. The smaller furnace or kiln measured c. 0.9m. long and 0.6m. wide; the larger was 'light-bulb' shaped in

plan, c. 1.9m. long x 1.2m. wide. The base of this feature had slumped into the subsided backfills of an underlying pit (Phase 3.4) and was therefore c. 0.3m. deeper at the east than the west end. In the centre of the slumped base the bricks showed signs of concentrated heat damage from firing. The debris that was found within the furnaces or kilns suggests that these were metal-working related structures. Whether these features were used as furnaces for heating metals or as kilns to fire clay moulds is uncertain, although further research may allow a more refined interpretation.

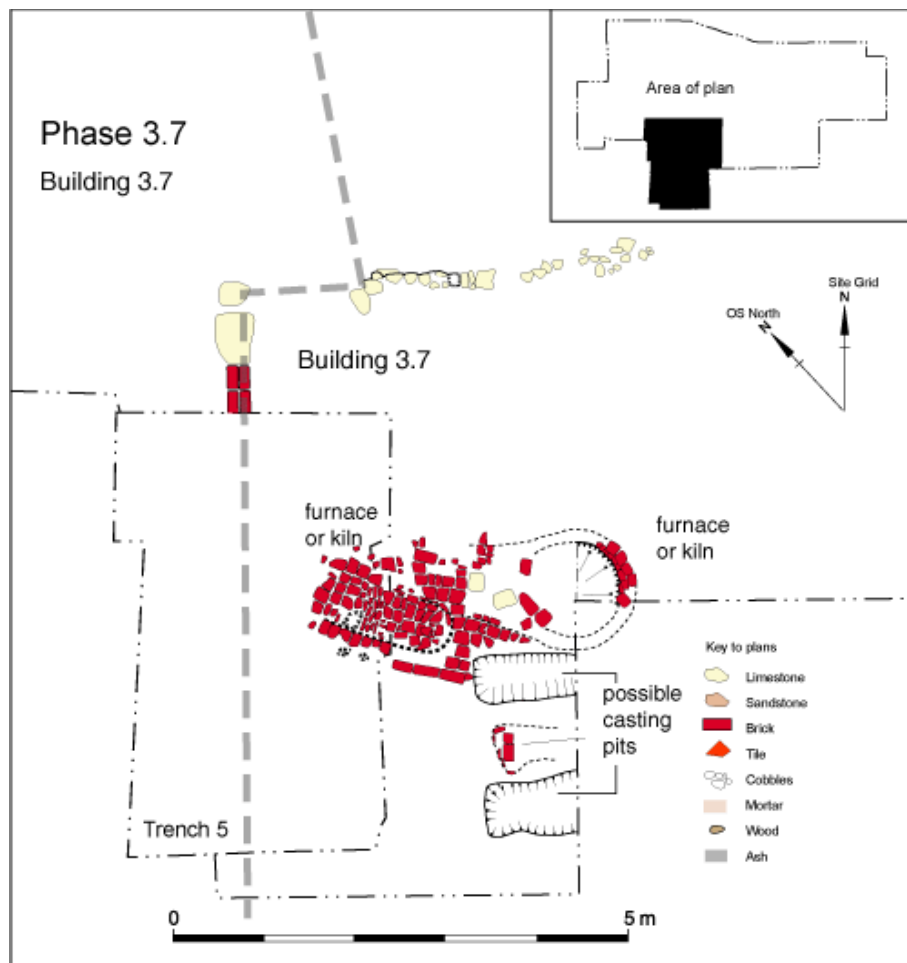


After the Phase 3.5 features went out of use and were covered over by a series of twenty four levelling, occupation, and demolition deposits (Phase 3.6).



Phase 3.5 tile hearth

## Phases 3.7 and 3.8, possible tenement boundary or building (Building 3.7)



On the ground levelled in Phase 3.6, a wall was built along the boundary between Tenements 3 and 4, and a second phase of furnaces was built (Phase 3.7). The remains of the brick wall, approximately 0.48m. in length and 0.28m. wide, were found in an alignment parallel with Hornpot Lane. In addition to two post pads they comprised the only remains of the north-west wall of the building. This abutted the north-east wall of Building 3.2 (Phase 3.2) at right-angles, thereby forming what appeared to be a structure or enclosure and the party wall between Tenements 3 and 4.



Phase 3.7 kiln or furnace overlying earlier Phase 3.5 features



Overlying and truncating the top of the 'light bulb' shaped furnace in Phase 3.5, there was another furnace or kiln (Phase 3.7). It was a similar shape and had a brick edging similar to the earlier furnace, but had no brick base, and was presumably a re-build following the subsidence of the earlier phase of furnace.

As with previous furnaces these features went out of use and, in Phase 3.8, were covered over by a series of sandy silts and clays which contained ash, charcoal and were discoloured by heating.

Phase 3.9, 3.10, third phase of furnaces and casting pits

In Phase 3.9 yet another furnace was built following the disuse and levelling off of the furnaces in Phases 3.5, 3.6 and 3.7. The structure was made from brick and was c. 1.6m. long and 0.6m. wide. Overlying the furnace there were layers consisting of ash, silty sand and clay, derived from the firing and use of the furnace.

To the south and south-east of the furnace there were the remains of a brick floor. This was probably the last phase of workshop floor in the sequence of furnace buildings. A number of post-holes, presumably structurally related to the construction of the furnace, were found nearby, although their precise function could not be ascertained.

Four small rectangular pits were dug south-west of the 3.9 furnaces. Each pit measured c. 0.5m. in width and c. 0.1m. in depth. Pits such as these were probably for casting; within them, sand would be used to stabilise the mould whilst an object was cast.

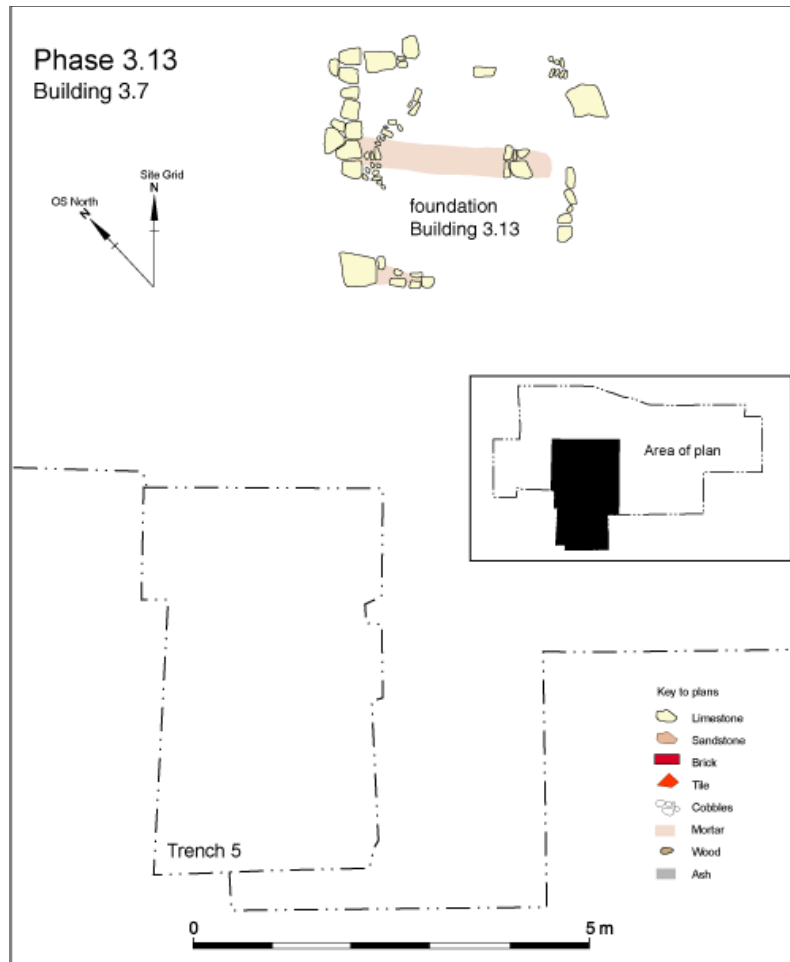


Possible rectangular casting pits (right of picture)

Phase 3.11, 3.12, levelling and dump deposits

The furnace, floor and casting pits went out of use and a period of levelling and dumping followed in Phase 3.11. Meanwhile, on the other side of the north-east wall of the furnace complex, numerous inter-cut pits were being dug, rubbish was being dumped into them and an accumulation of dumps and pit fills covered over earlier features such as the lined cess pit and hearths in the north-eastern part of the Tenement 3.

## Phase 3.13, Building 3.13



The pit digging and dumping came to an end, and the use of the north-east part of the tenement changed when a small square building (Building 3.13) was built over the old pits and accumulated dumps. Partial remains of limestone block wall foundations were identified. Some of the structure had been lost through later truncations, but the outline of the building and its rusty red-brown occupation deposits could clearly be seen covering a footprint c. 3.2m wide. Finds from the occupation deposits indicated that the structure had probably been used for a metal-working purpose, and dated to the 15th or 16th century. Demolition deposits overlying the building remains indicate that the building went out of use and was demolished in the 18th century.





Building 3.13

## Phase 3.14 -15 and 2.8 (Building 3.14)



The final building phase (Phase 3.14) in Tenement 3 was a substantial 17th or 18th century building. The foundations projected north-east from the rear of 64 and 66 Low Petergate (Building 3.14). The foundations were made from limestone blocks on timber piles (Building 3.14).

At the time it was constructed, access to Building 3.14 appears to have been via a passageway between Tenements 3 and 4. When compared to the evidence from the building survey (Geddes and Mason 2004) this was probably built around the time when the main buildings,

fronting onto Low Petergate, were apparently owned by the Talbot family (RCHMY 5 189). From the structural evidence it appears that numerous alterations were made during the 17th and 18th, and the construction of Building 3.14 was most probably the catalyst for the insertion of a passageway between the properties. There were a number of walls, culverts, floors and yard surfaces that were associated with Building 3.14 in both Tenements 3 and 4.

Sometime after the construction of Building 3.14 a culvert was built. It was more than 15m in length, made from brick and re-used stone (Phase 3.15) and ran from the north-east to the south-west of the site. The builders had broken through the foundation walls of Building 3.14 (Phase 3.14), so that it could pass underneath the building.



Building 3.14



Flagged path alongside Building 3.14 leading to passage between 64 and 66 Low Petergate

#### 4.2.4 *Tenement 4*

##### Phases 4.1 - 4.3 (Trench 5)

The earliest deposits excavated in Tenement 4 comprised a series of dump, levelling or occupation deposits. Over these, a boundary or possible post-built building was constructed (Phase 4.2). Although earlier, this post alignment was on the same north-east / south west alignment as the north-west wall of Building 3.7.

The timber structure was subsequently covered over by a series of dumps and accumulation layers of sandy clays derived from metalworking (Phase 4.3).

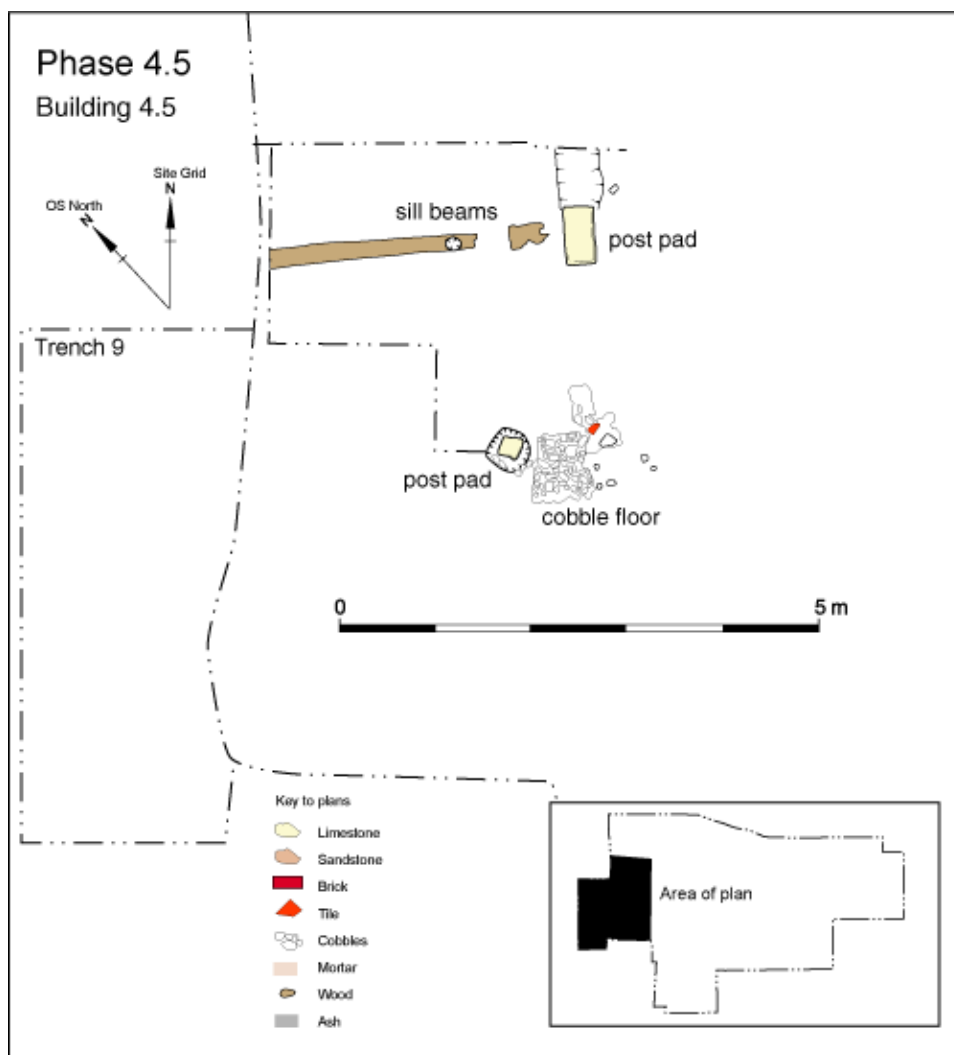
##### Phase 4.4, industrial occupation and Building 4.4

##### Building in Trench 5

Following the period of dumps and accumulation in Phase 4.3 several pits were dug and a series of layers derived from metal-working activity began to build up (Phase 4.4). At around this time a building was erected in Tenement 4 (Building 4.4, not on plan). Its foundations were made from densely packed cobbles and small limestone fragments, aligned north-east / south-west, in a trench c. 0.6m wide. Associated with Building 4.4 was a patch of burnt clay or daub and compacted ash, interpreted as a hearth.

##### Phases 4.5, (Building 4.5) and 4.6, main excavation area

In Phase 4.5, possibly during the time Building 4.4 was in use, a workshop (Building 4.5) was erected in the north-east part of Tenement 4. The structural remains comprised a timber sill-beam, a post-pad, and several stake-holes (Phase 4.5). Above the sill beam, which was sunk into a narrow trench in the ground, the structure was probably of timber framed construction. The numerous layers and small pits (Phase 4.6) containing quantities of charcoal, fired clay mould fragments and metal slag that were found suggest that Building 4.5 had been a metal workers' workshop. In addition, a small rectangular pit containing a timber lining was found. The pit's function remains uncertain, although it may have been used for some kind of storage within the workshop.



Sill beam, Building 4.5

Phases 4.7 (Building 4.7) 4.8, 4.9, 4.10, and 4.11

After a period of occupation (Phase 4.6), Building 4.5 went out of use and was apparently replaced by a more substantial structure (Phase 4.7), probably also of timber framed construction, but with stone and brick sill beam foundations (Building 4.7).



Two foundations made from re-used stone blocks and brick were identified. They formed a rectangular footprint in the north-east part of Tenement 4 on a north-west / south-east alignment.



Post-pad (centre, above scale) within sill beam foundation, Building 4.7

The structure continued beyond the area of excavation to the north-west, probably up to the assumed edge of the tenement. A series of post-pads was located within and between the



north-east and south-west walls of the building, indicating that the upper part of the structure was timber framed, rather than of stone.

Several floors and many occupation deposits were excavated, although distinguishing workshop floors from dump and levelling deposits was difficult because they were mostly made up of compacted silt clay and mould debris.

In what is interpreted as the east corner of Building 4.7 there was a rectangular, stone- and brick-lined cess-pit containing cessy use deposits. The pit measured c. 1.4m. in length and c. 0.4m. in width. The south-west end of the pit partly projected into the building. A post-hole located at the north-east end of the wall (Building 4.7) parallel to Hornpot Lane suggests that there was a timber construction built to bridge the gap over the cess pit. This indicates that there was a garderobe in the corner of the room, discharging into the pit outside.

Curiously, a small culvert made from brick, tile and stone drained away from the south-west upper edge of the lined pit, apparently into the building. Unfortunately, where the culvert went is unknown, due to truncation by later activity, and it is not possible to say with any certainty what this feature was for.

#### *Occupation of Building 4.7*

During the occupation of Building 4.7 and its use for metal working (Phase 4.8), a number of floors made from compacted clay and silt were created and subsequently covered by layers of metal-working debris. The complex multiple layers of sands, silts and clays contained large quantities of metal-working debris such as mould fragments, metal slag, charcoal and coal fragments, as well as metal objects and off-cuts.



Small culvert, Building 4.7

#### *Addition of floors*

Later in its life improvements were made within Building 4.7 (Phase 4.9), including a more substantial cobble floor. Its remains comprised an incomplete patchy surface of cobbles, possibly the result of repairs and alterations over time.

The cobble floor was, in turn overlain by layer upon layer of metal-working debris and floors (Phase 4.10). Clusters of stake holes were found near to post-pads within Building 4.7, and possibly indicate where industrial activities were concentrated in the corner of workshop rooms.

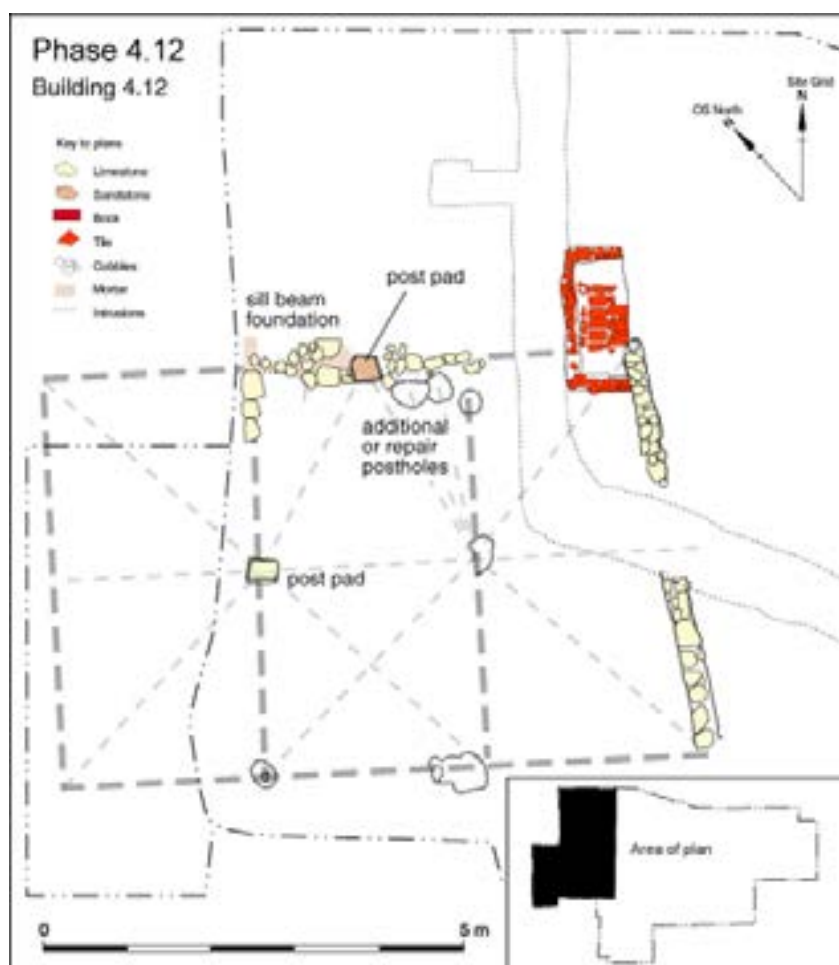
#### *Possible internal partition*



In Phase 4.11 a cobble surface was created in a long shallow cut, aligned north-east / south-west, between the north-east and south-west walls of Building 4.7. Whether the feature was a sill-beam foundation, or a repair to an earlier floor, is uncertain, although its north-east / south-west alignment along one of the building's axes, supports the interpretation that it formed an internal partition within Building 4.7.

Phase 4.12, 4.13, Building 4.12

After a period of intensive activity in Building 4.7, the building was re-built, or at least altered extensively, incorporating parts of the earlier structure (Phase 4.12). Evidence in the form of post-holes and robbed-out post-pads showed that a timber building was built up to the north-east wall of Building 4.7 on a series of posts that formed two parallel north-east / south-west alignments (Building 4.12).



The alignments of pile clusters were c. 2.5m. apart. If the structure made use of existing standing walls from Building 4.7 on the north-east and south-east sides, then it could have been more than 5 x 5m, and may have continued further beyond the excavation limit to the north-west.

#### *Occupation*

During the building's use a layer of occupation debris accumulated within Building 4.12, and lots of small pits, trenches and clusters of stake-holes were dug into it (Phase 4.13). The

location of these pits indicates that there were concentrations of activity, or structures, in specific areas of the building such as in the corners and at the edges of rooms.



Bryan Antoni cleaning a post-pad, Building 4.7

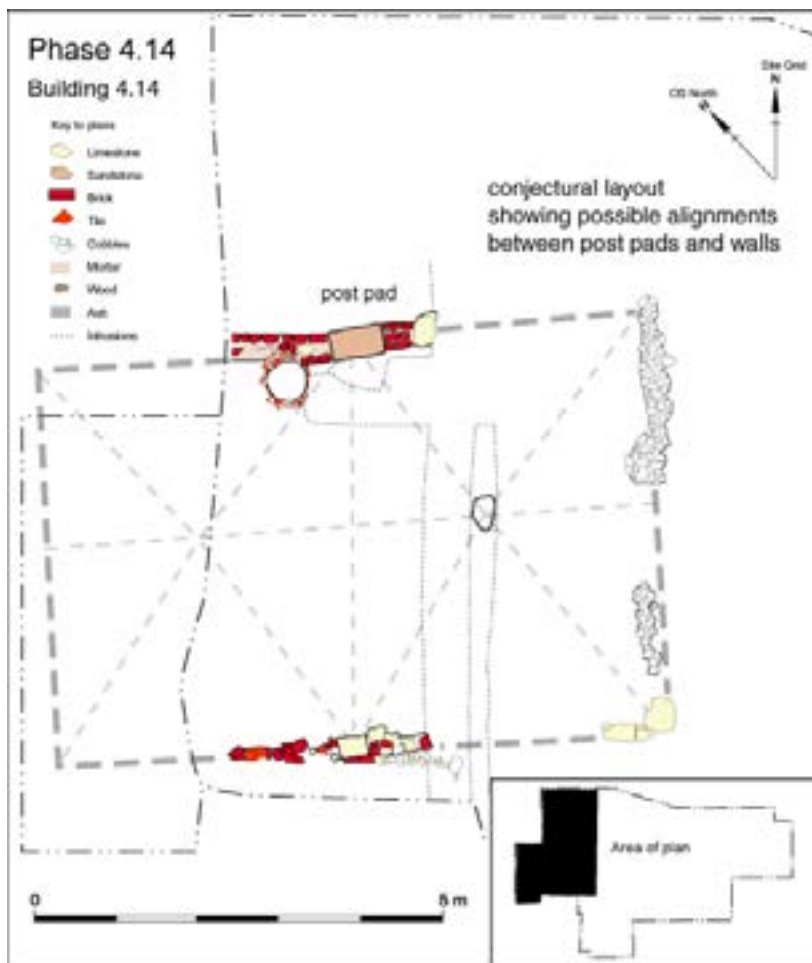
#### Phase 4.14, 4.15, Building 4.14 (=Phase 1.3)

Following a period of intensive use, the north-east wall of the Building 4.12 workshop was entirely re-built (Phase 4.14). A new foundation of stone and brick was made on top of the old sill beam foundation of Building 4.7. The remains comprised three sill-beam foundations and a number of post-pads and floors, and may have incorporated some of the post-holes and post-pads from Building 4.12. The footprint of the building covered an area c. 8m. wide and up to 12m. long, and was probably a two bay construction.

A pit c. 0.5m in diameter was found apparently incorporated as an integral feature within the inner edge of the north-east wall of the workshop. Careful observation showed that, visible on its inside edges, there were horizontal indentations caused by the hoops of a barrel lining. The barrel lining made the pit relatively water-tight, in this case probably to hold water for quenching metals or for making casting moulds.

#### *Use of Building 4.14*

Subsequently, in Phase 4.15, layers of occupation and build-up accumulated and several shallow pits were dug within Building 4.14. A large quantity of metal-working debris and objects was found, which give an insight into the kinds of items made in the workshops.



South-west wall of Building 4.14

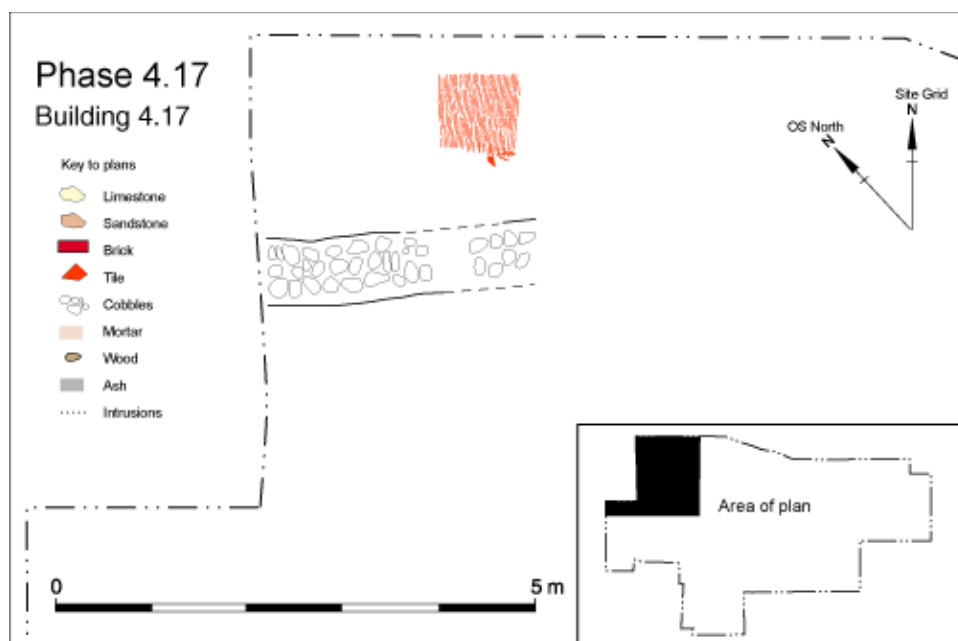


Quenching or storage pit, Building 4.14

### Phase 4.16, Pit digging

During the period that Building 4.14 was used as a workshop large, deep refuse pits were being dug in the area outside, beyond the wall at its north-east end (Phase 4.16). Pit backfills and dumps containing both domestic and industrial material were found in the north corner of the area of excavation in Tenement 4.

### Phase 4.17, (Building 4.17) and 4.18



In Phase 4.17 pit digging ceased in the area north of Building 4.14 and a building was constructed (Building 4.17). The remains comprised a truncated tile hearth measuring c. 0.86 x 0.82m., deposits resulting from its use, and a substantial wall foundation made from large cobbles in a trench aligned north-west / south-east. Pottery recovered from some of these deposits indicates the building was constructed sometime in or after the 14th century.

### Disuse of Building 4.17 and subsequent pit digging (Phase 4.18)

It seems that after a relatively short period Building 4.17 went out of use and the area north-east of Building 4.14 was once again used for pit-digging (Phase 4.18). A number of inter-cut

pits truncated the hearth and floor of Building 4.17, and a series of dumps covered what remained of the structure. Pottery from the deposits suggest that this happened in the late medieval and possibly the early post-medieval period.

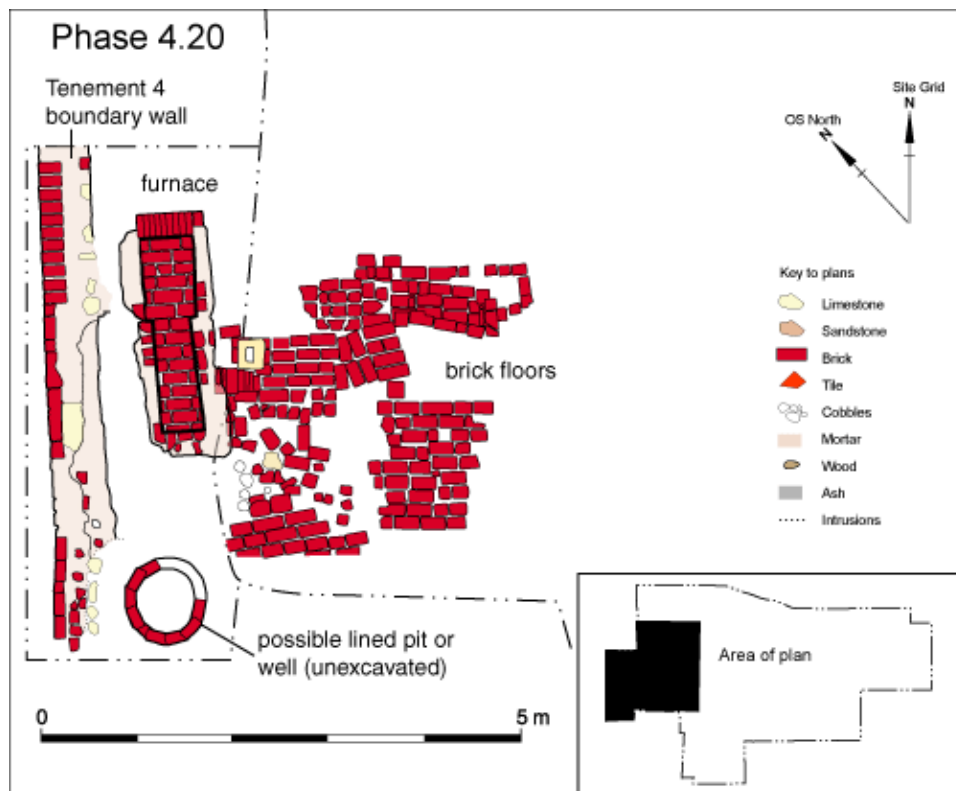
#### Phase 4.19, creation of yard surfaces

Finally, after a period of pit digging (Phase 4.17), the area north of Building 4.14 was made into a yard (Phase 4.19). The remains of yard surfaces and a culvert were built over the earlier pit fills and dumps (Phase 4.18). These comprised a short length of brick-built culvert, two small brick floors, measuring less than 1m. in length and up to 0.8m. in width, and a very small patch of a possible tile hearth or surface measuring 0.3m. x 0.3m.



Yard surfaces and a brick culvert, Phase 4.19

#### Phase 4.20, last phase of possible early post-med furnace.



Meanwhile, in an area nearer to Low Petergate, there was apparently a final phase of metalworking activity. The archaeological evidence consisted of a series of brick structures,



floors and layers of metal-working debris (Phase 4.20). The structures are tentatively dated to the 16th and 17th centuries by the associated pottery and ceramic building material. At this time substantial brick floors and yard surfaces were created, and a large brick furnace was built alongside the north-west boundary wall Tenement 4. A brick lined storage or quenching pit was also found associated with the nearby furnace, and with layers of metal working deposits.



Post-medieval brick furnace

#### 4.2.5 *All Tenements*

Phases 1.11 - 13, 2.9, 3.14 -15, 4.21-22

The more recent use of the four tenements consisted of the clearance of the site of Building 3.14, subsequent ground make-up, an accumulation of overburden from pit digging and backyard dumping (Phase 1.11) and the construction of new ranges of out-buildings (Phases 1.12 and 4.21). Associated with these modern buildings were various sewage and drainage features (Phase 4.21).

The most notable features were a number of 18th or 19th century brick and cobble floors from buildings along Hornpot Lane (Phase 1.12). The buildings, fronting onto Hornpot Lane, were demolished sometime after the mid 20th century. They can be seen in an aerial photograph of the site taken in the late 1940s.

#### *20th century overburden and levelling*

Finally, the tenements were levelled off with mixed rubble and overburden, some of which probably came from the construction of new school buildings in the 1920s, and later, the demolition of 68 Low Petergate (Phases 1.13 / 2.9 / 3.16 / 4.22).





18th or 19th century brick and cobble floors near Hornpot Lane

### The rear of 62 Low Petergate

#### *The well*

At the north-west end of the site there was a playground area which was to be stripped for landscaping. This was once the garden for the Georgian building 62 Low Petergate, and was to be returned to its former use. During the machining an impressive stone-lined well was found just beyond the edge of Tenement 4. The lining of the structure was very expertly made. The cut limestone blocks were the work of experienced masons, and must have been undertaken at considerable cost, suggesting it was associated with a building of high status. It had chamfered corners on the south east side, right-angle corners on the north-west side. The stone-work was very neatly cut and the blocks tightly joined. It was impossible for anyone to go down safely into the well but a number of iron pins could be seen in one edge of the lining, indicating there may have been a ladder attached to the side of the well. The well probably belonged to the Georgian house Number 62 Low Petergate, built for John Shaw in 1725 (RCHME).

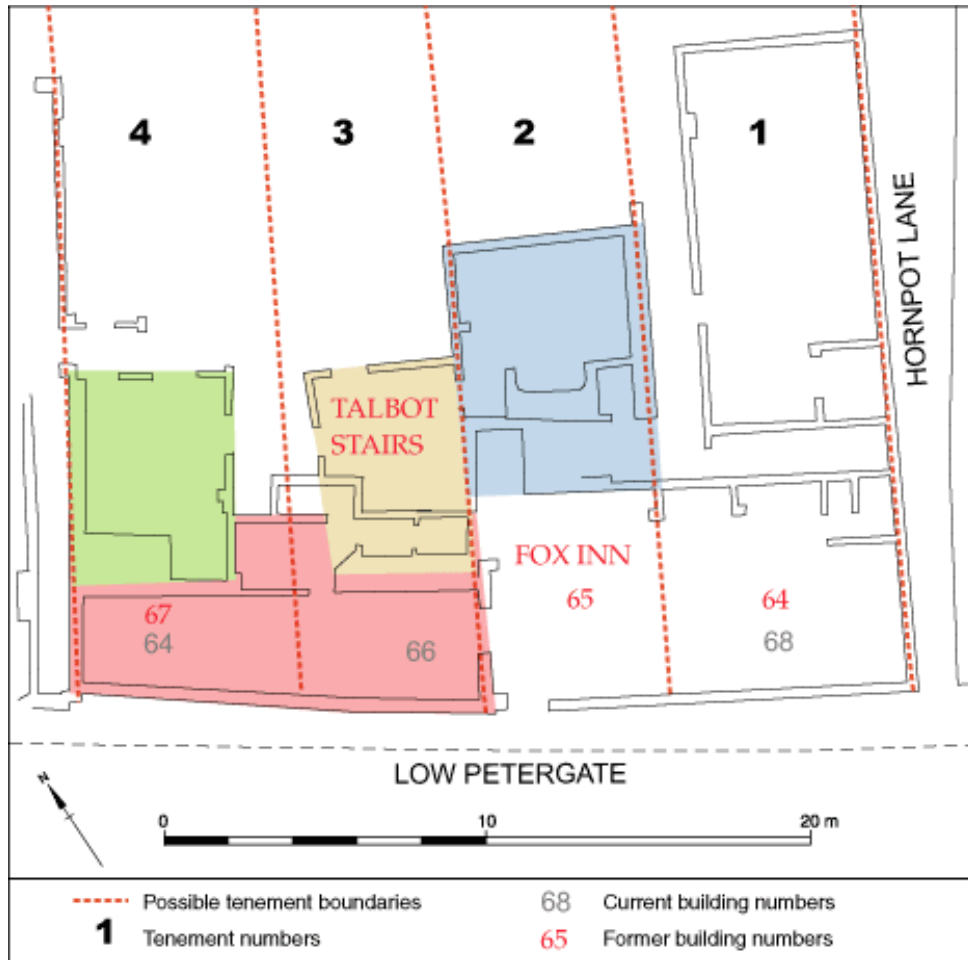


Stone-lined well behind 62 Low Petergate

## 5 BUILDING SURVEY

Both the interior and the exterior of the standing buildings at 62-68 Low Petergate required extensive restoration and alteration before they could be put to modern use. The buildings had been empty since the closure of the York College for Girls and were in a poor state of repair.

The Street was re-numbered in the 20th century (see fig 1 and table below for numbering). 62 Low Petergate (formerly 68 Low Petergate) is mainly of Georgian construction, but has Victorian additions.



Tenement	New no.	Former no.	Building
1	68	64	—
2	68	65 (The Fox)	A
3	66	66	B/D
4	64	67	C/D



The rear façades of 64-68 Low Petergate are predominantly of timber framed construction; parts of the framing are 15th century in date, but the majority is of later construction.

The front block of 64-66 Low Petergate (formerly 66 and 67 Low Petergate) is 18th century in date. It is five bays in length, built parallel to Low Petergate across what are interpreted as two medieval tenements, between 62 Low Petergate and the former Fox Inn (Tenements 3 and 4).

68 Low Petergate (the former Fox Inn, formerly 64 and 65 Low Petergate) incorporates two medieval tenements (Tenements 1 and 2). The front parts of the buildings were demolished and a new school building was built in the late 20th century.

The restoration exposed only what was necessary, such as where old plaster was falling away from the walls, or doorways needed to be opened up. For the purposes of the building survey the most useful alteration made was the removal of the unsympathetic 20th-century concrete render from between the timber framing at the rear of the properties, so that it could be replaced with traditional materials. This provided a unique opportunity to record the 'skeleton' of the building, reveal dating evidence and understand more about how it was constructed.

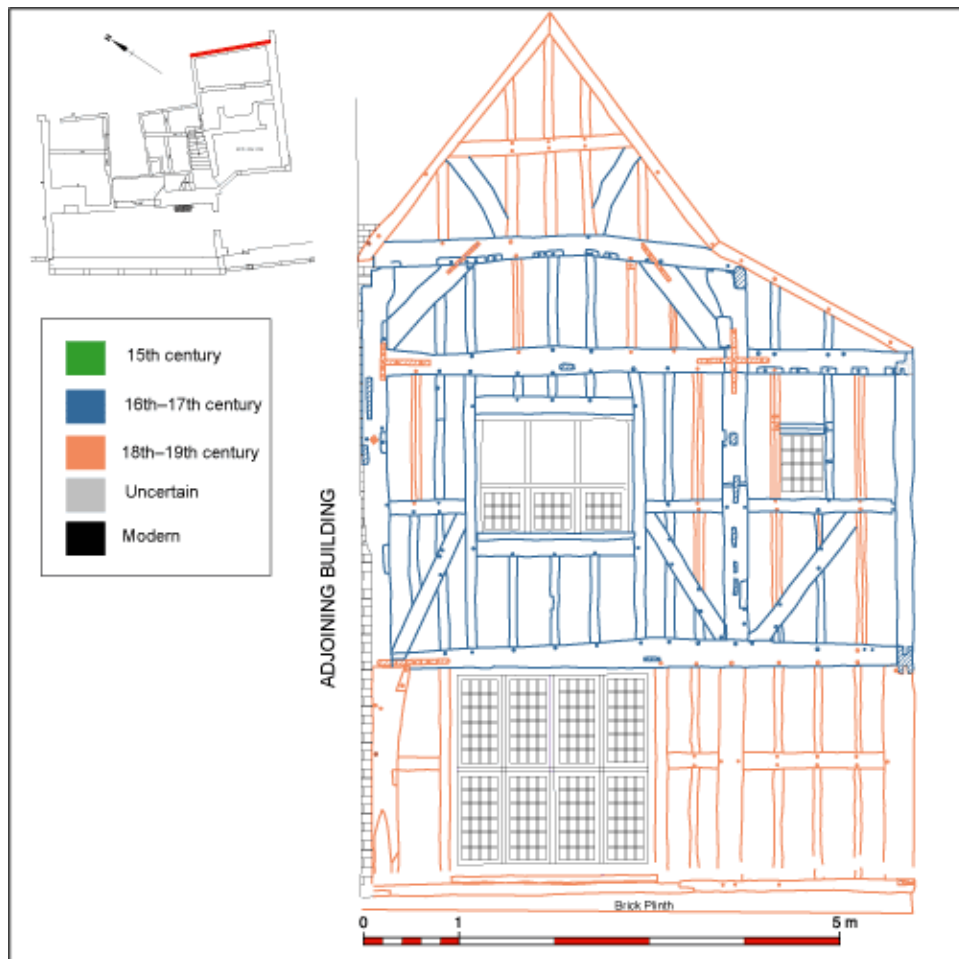
In May 2004 the recording of the building's historic fabric was undertaken by YAT building archaeologists George Geddes and Isabel Mason. The principal focus of the building recording was the timber framed structures. Schematic architects' drawings were augmented by detailed observation and hand measurement of both the internal and external timber framing.

Any irregularity in the shape of timbers, their alignment, carpentry detail such as carpenters' marks, peg-holes and joints, were recorded.

Wherever alterations were made inside the buildings, such as plaster removed from walls or ceilings and structural fabric revealed, the detail was observed and recorded using measured drawings and photographs



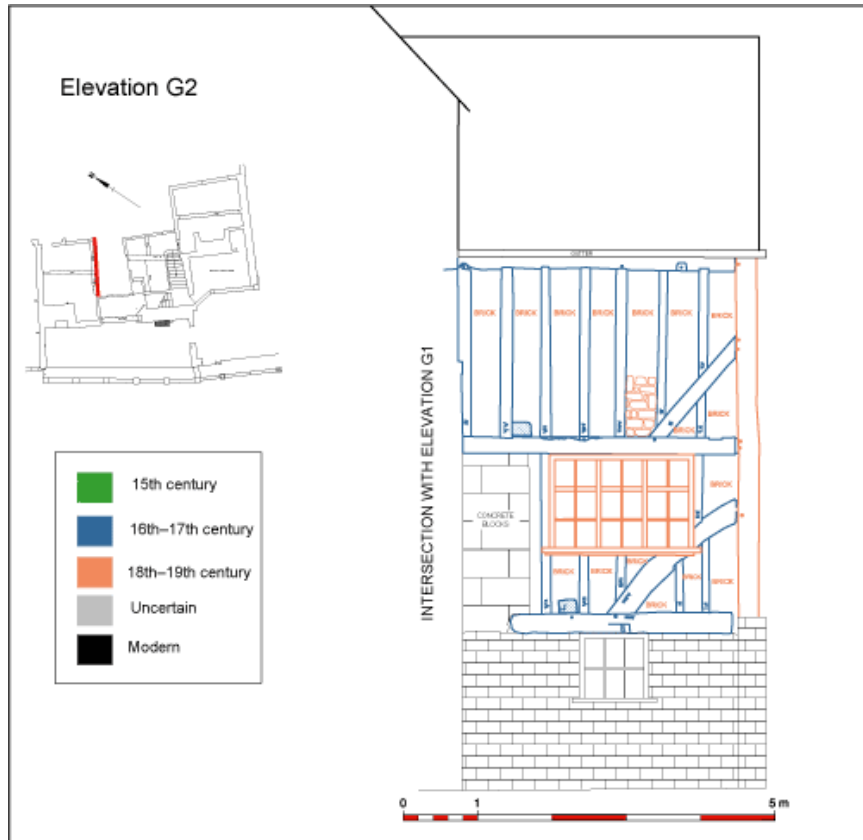
Post-medieval lath and plaster on an internal wall











### Building A, Number 68 (Tenement 2) – previously 65 Low Petergate

Building A was the 'The Fox Inn' until its closure in 1936 (Wenham 1965, 26). The building, as noted by the RCHM and Pantin, was of 15th-century construction and built at a right angle to Low Petergate. In its original form it was probably a house with a shop at the front. The 2004 survey supported this interpretation but, due to the fragmentary nature of the evidence, failed to find evidence to define the functions of individual room within the medieval building. It is not known when the building became an inn.

Four phases of construction were identified in total. The earliest timber parts of the timber framing were found to be 15th-century in date. An extension butting up to the back of the 15th-century building was found to date from the 17th century. At this time a fireplace was installed on the ground floor between the extension and the 15th-century building. In the 18th and 19th centuries two further phases of alterations were undertaken, including the rebuilding of Elevation D (Geddes and Mason 2004, 19).

### Building B (Tenement 3)

Building B contained major building phases of the 15th and the late 17th century, followed by alterations in the 18th-20th centuries.

The earliest phase of the building was apparent only in Elevation E (north-east end) of Building B, where the timber framing and a diagnostic unglazed window on the third floor were characteristically 15th century (Jane Grenville pers. comm.). The large, wide mullion window indicates the presence of a high status room and suggests that this building, like Building A, possibly had a first floor hall (Geddes and Mason 2004, 28).



15th century window mullions

In the mid- to late-17th century the insertion of the so called Talbot stairs (RCHMY, 191) brought with it major alterations to the building. Of note is the decorative timber in Elevation F which has a carved vine trail motif possibly associated with the Talbot Inn. Further alterations included the insertion of a characteristic 18th century window also in Elevation F (north-west elevation) (Geddes and Mason 2004, 28). As with Building A, it was not possible to determine the function of individual rooms, as internally their arrangement dated to the 18th century. Elevation G2, the south east elevation of Building B, had timber framing of 16th or 17th century origins.



17th-century beam with vine trail decoration



The 'Talbot' stairs

### Building C (Tenement 4)

Building C is located in Tenement 4. The earliest internal fabric was possibly a chimney block at the front of the building, although this could not be positively confirmed. Timber framing dating to the 16th and 17th century was identified in Elevation G2 (south-east facing). In the 18th or early 19th centuries the gable end of the building was completely rebuilt, removing any possible surviving medieval fabric and, as with the other buildings in the row, the front of the building was replaced by Building D (Geddes and Mason 2004, 36).

Further additions and repairs were made in the 18th and 19th centuries and in the 20th century most of the ground floor fabric was removed, leaving only the ceiling and chimneys (Geddes and Mason 2004, 44).

### Building D (Tenements 3 and 4 parallel to street front)

In the 18th century the medieval frontage of the buildings in all four tenements was removed and rebuilt. A single large five bay building (Building D) was constructed parallel to the street frontage across the frontage of Tenements 3 and 4 (between 62 Low Petergate and the former Fox Inn). Building D was dated by the style of its windows to the 18th century, and more specifically by a lead rainwater drain head on the front of the building to 1743 (Geddes and Mason 2004, 42). At this time new internal floors, partitions and a roof were added. It appears that some earlier features were retained in Building D such as a brick chimney stack, thought to be medieval.

Further additions and repairs were made in the 18th and 19th centuries and in the 20th century most of the ground floor fabric was removed, leaving only the ceiling and chimneys (Geddes and Mason 2004, 44).

## 6 THE POTTERY

By Ailsa Mainman and Anne Jenner

Two and a half thousand sherds of pottery were recovered from just over 400 contexts during excavation, providing a useful chronological framework for the site. The assemblage dates overwhelmingly to the 14th century, the hallmark being pottery known as Brandsby-type ware which dominates York's ceramic market from the late 13th century, peaking in the middle decades of the 14th century (Brooks 1987, Mainman 1993, Mainman and Jenner in prep). Other wares, including Red Sandy wares, Scarborough ware, York Glazed wares, Humber wares and other minor wares occur but to a far lesser extent.

The assemblages from the different tenements is summarised below.

### Tenement 1

Contexts from the earliest phases (Phase 1.2-1.7, 138 sherds in total) in this tenement produced exclusively 14th century pottery with only a little earlier residual material. Most contexts have only Brandsby-type wares, or Brandsby wares occasionally in association with Sandy Red wares, Scarborough ware and York Glazed wares, suggesting a date range within c.1250-1350. A few contexts also have Humber wares and may, therefore, be of early date. There is an emphasis on decorated jug forms although cooking vessels, and occasional lamps, also occur. The range of decoration includes seals, rouletting and various forms of incised decoration.

Phase 1.8 produced a remarkably consistent assemblage (143 sherds) comprised almost entirely of Brandsby-type wares. Jugs predominate and there is a wide range of decoration, including horizontal incised lines, line and pellet, applied strip decoration and seals. Decorative elements such as twisted handles, thumbing and the use of different coloured glazes add to the stylistic repertoire. A date in the middle decades of the 14th century is indicated.

Pottery from Phase 1.9 includes material with a date range of the 12th to the 17th century, suggesting some disturbance of deposits. The bulk of the contexts, however, had only pottery of the later 14th century. This included Brandsby-type wares and Humber wares, usually jugs but also occasional urinals, cooking pots and cisterns. A few sherds of late 14th century German stonewares represent the only imported wares.

The pottery which dates to the 15th-17th centuries included a range of late medieval wares - Cistercian wares, Purple Glazed wares, Hambleton-type wares and a few post-medieval forms. One or two contexts (e.g. 4756) have clearly intrusive material of 19th century date.

Phases 1.10-1.12 produced few sherds (42 in total) which include redeposited Humber and Brandsby wares of 14th and 15th century date, together with small amounts of late 16th and early 17th century pottery. These comprised Cistercian wares, Black wares and imported German stonewares, including part of a bottle or costrel. Later contexts also include 19th and early 20th century types.





Top row, l—r:  
Fragments of jugs with pellet decoration;  
Decorated Brandsby Ware sherds;  
Bung hole from cistern

Below:  
Comb decoration on jug

## Tenement 2

One hundred and twenty-five sherds were recovered from Phases 2.1–2.4. As in Tenement 1 the assemblages are dominated by Brandsby-type wares, occasional Humber wares and minor wares typical of the 14th century in York. York Glazed wares of the later 13th and early 14th century are present in a number of contexts, possibly redeposited from earlier levels. A striking example from Group 57 (context 4462) is part of a highly decorated seal jug whose round seal has the central feature of the top of a bird's head and wing with the legend "SIG..." This has a close parallel on a vessel from Wellington Row, York, where the complete seal is believed to be a copy of the seal of Thomas Fitz Walter. Other examples of this seal are known from elsewhere in the city.

A larger quantity of material (three hundred and nineteen sherds), was recovered from Phase 2.5. The bulk of the pottery is once again of 14th century date with some Humber or Hambleton-type wares extending the date range into the 15th century. Once again there is a small amount of residual material but little earlier than the 11th century. Brandsby-type ware jugs, Red Sandy ware jugs (including one complete form from context 4628) and cooking vessels dominate the assemblage. One context (4495 in Group 187) has Cistercian wares, German stonewares and Ryedale ware which are probably 17th century date and, therefore, intrusive.



Bransby-type ware jug

Red Sandy Ware jug

While Phase 2.7 included pottery from the 13th and 14th century, the majority is from the later medieval period (15th-16th century), suggesting the earlier material is residual. The later medieval wares include late Humber wares, Hambleton wares, Purple Glazed wares (including typically later forms such as large jugs and cisterns), while the medieval wares are the usual Bransby and earlier Humber wares. A complete example of a large Siegburg stoneware vessel (context 4167) is a rare find.



Siegburg stoneware vessel

### Tenement 3

Only one hundred and forty sherds in total were recovered from Phases 3.1–3.9 which all relate to the buildings and features associated with the metal working activities on the site. Much of the area excavated was given over to metal-working activities so there was little space for the digging of rubbish pits. No large assemblages were recovered from the associated levels, and a degree of redeposition must have taken place as pits and post holes associated with the metal-working features and structures were dug into earlier levels. This

has led to a mixed assemblage including some earlier Norman pottery which has become incorporated with material associated with the 14th century activities. Even the lowest phase (Phase 3.1), however, contains Brandsby-type ware jugs of mid 14th century date.

Similarly little material was recovered from the layers associated with the casting pits (Phase 3.10) and some of it, including residual Norman period sherds, clearly pre-date their use. The rest of the material is broadly 14th century in date, but quantities are small.

By Phase 3.11 deposits were becoming mixed as medieval pottery and Norman period pottery (gritty and splashed wares) were recovered together with pottery of the 17th and 18th centuries. Context 4228 and 4229 in particular produced the odd sherd of tin-glazed earthenware and post-medieval earthenware which must be intrusive in these levelling deposits.

The pottery (93 sherds) from Phase 3.12 belongs to the second half of the 14th century, and comprises late Brandsby-type ware forms, Humber wares, early Hambleton wares and a small but consistent number of German stonewares. There are also several examples of a crude industrial form of pottery which require further investigation as they may relate to some of the industrial activities on the site.

Phases 3.13-3.15 produced one hundred and sixteen sherds which relate to modern and late Georgian episodes on the site and produced little useful pottery, some possibly related to industrial purposes. Small amounts of residual medieval pottery were recovered from some contexts.

#### Tenement 4

Just over nine hundred sherds of pottery were recovered from Phases 4.3–4.15. These phases span the period c.1250–1400, the episode known in pottery terms as the 'highly decorated' period. Elaborate decorated jugs and plainer cooking pots and bowls dominate the assemblages. Early Humber wares, Brandsby wares, York Glazed wares and, to a lesser extent, Red Sandy wares and Scarborough wares, together with other minor types, produced a range of jug forms with different styles of decoration. Although there is some Norman gritty ware and splashed ware, this is almost certainly residual as even the lowest deposits (Phase 4.3 and 4.4) are dominated by late 13th/early 14th century Brandsby-type wares. Many of the vessels in these deposits are heavily sooted, both from cooking and from their deposition in close association with metal-working waste.



Applied decoration

Handle with cross hatch decoration

The pottery (68 sherds) from Phase 4.16, an episode of pit digging to the north of Building 3, is mostly of 14th and early 15th century date. Brandsby-type ware is once again the predominant type, together with occasional sherds of Humber ware and Hambleton wares of

the early 15th century. Jugs and cooking vessels are the common forms together with one or two unusual forms such as an insect trap.

Phases 4.17-4.19 produced only 21 sherds which included residual medieval pottery together with late and post-medieval types such as Cistercian wares, post-medieval earthenwares and occasional tin-glazed earthenwares. By Phases 4.20 and 4.21, pottery from the 18th and 19th century buildings and yards had produced a range of residual medieval, post-medieval and modern pottery types.

#### Discussion

There is strikingly little residual pottery from the Roman, Anglo-Saxon, Anglo-Scandinavian or Norman periods in the assemblage. Inevitably on large urban sites where development and re-development has taken place over many centuries, material from earlier deposits is dug up by pit and foundation digging, and redeposited in deposits of later periods. This does not seem to have happened to any great extent on this site, in stark contrast to other urban excavations at, for example, 16-22 Coppergate or at the College of the Vicars Choral at the Bedern where 13th and 14th century layers had considerable quantities of re-deposited Roman and Norman period pottery (Mainman and Jenner in prep).

This absence of residual pottery is surprising given the central location of the site at the heart of the Roman legionary fortress and at the core of the Anglo-Scandinavian and Norman city. When Peter Wenham excavated part of what we are now calling Tenement 1, however, he recovered Roman pottery in some quantity (Hartley 1972, 106-108), and his post-Roman pottery sequence begins in the Anglo-Scandinavian period with late 9th century York wares, and goes through to the 15th century (Le Patourel 1972, 108-113). The Anglo-Scandinavian and earlier deposits were sealed under a five foot thick deposit (Layer 8) of 'black, evil-smelling soil with a large organic content' (Wenham 1972, 82) which contained pottery which Le Patourel dates to the 12th or early 13th century. These included Stamford wares, gritty wares and splashed wares, which were noticeably rare in the early levels of the recent excavations. It seems likely, therefore, that this thick organic layer effectively sealed the earlier levels of Norman, Anglo-Scandinavian and Roman date with the result that little Roman and Anglo-Scandinavian material intruded into the medieval layers.

Apart from occasional sherds from splashed ware pitchers and gritty ware cooking pots, the earliest wares represented in the recent excavations are York Glazed wares which, in the course of the later 12th and early 13th century, replaced splashed wares as the typical jug fabric. York Glazed wares are frequently found in association with the later Brandsby-type wares, suggesting that they too are mostly residual from earlier, unexcavated deposits; the same is true of the less frequent Scarborough wares and Beverley wares.

The predominance of Brandsby-type wares on this site indicates that the excavated sequence begins in the latter years of the 13th century, and that the buildings and associated activities fall mainly into the 14th century, continuing, perhaps into the early 15th century. The range of forms supports this interpretation as early decorated jugs with elaborate bridge spouts and applied or incised decoration are replaced by later plainer types, and the range extends to include urinals, cisterns, lobed bowls and other forms.

This same sequence of medieval pottery was noted by Le Patourel at Wenham's excavation. Le Patourel was cautious about interpreting her observations; 'It is difficult to assess the extent to which such changes reflect a genuine development in decorative fashion and how far they are due to the chances of survival' (Le Patourel 1972, 111). Fifty years of research since those pioneering days of medieval pottery study in York have confirmed that these changes are part of a genuine pattern, as the new material from Tenements 1-4 clearly demonstrates.

There are few imported vessels from Low Petergate, either from Wenham's excavations or the recent work. French imports (which are more common in the 13th century), are rare, although there are one or two examples of red-painted pottery which might have a French origin. German and Low Countries imports, typical of the 14th and 15th centuries, are never common in York but are perhaps slightly better represented on this site than on other sites of the period. This might be an indicator of wealth or status for the occupants of these properties.

The [finds report](#) indicates that a range of industrial processes, associated with metal-working, went on in the backyards of these premises. This might account for the group of coarse open pottery forms which have evidence of unusual sooting marks and internal residues. Further work will be carried out on this material in conjunction with the study of the metal-working processes.

The main value of this pottery assemblage is the tight time-frame represented by the material. It offers an opportunity to examine the developments in ceramics over a 100–150 year period, free of the confusion usually caused by residual earlier material. Changes in forms, styles of decoration and the association of one ceramic type with another provide a reliable, detailed framework for the 14th century.

This framework will be invaluable for interpreting other important medieval assemblages from the city - including key groups from the Vicars Choral in the Bedern and a well group sealed under the 14th century north aisles of York Minster. This new assemblage will be included in on-going research on medieval pottery which will be published as *Medieval Pottery from York* (Mainman and Jenner forthcoming).

Above all the pottery offers a snap-shot of the range of forms and types used in the medieval city centre by artisans associated with a range of domestic and industrial activities, and gives new insights into their status and wealth.

## **7 MEDIEVAL LIFE AT LOW PETERGATE AS SEEN THROUGH THE ARTEFACTS**

by Ailsa Mainman

### Introduction

The medieval finds assemblage from Low Petergate is a remarkable and important collection. The bulk of the material derives from one hundred to one hundred and fifty years of activity, the equivalent of no more than four or five working generations of York's medieval inhabitants.

It is also a well-dated sequence, beginning in the second half of the 13th century and continuing into the early 15th century, with the bulk of the evidence belonging to the 14th



century. All the datable material - the pottery, ceramic building materials, artefact types - and the independent dendrochronological dates, agree on this dating.

The site is also remarkably free from the contamination of residual material churned up from earlier levels by later ground disturbances. This is rare on an urban site and is especially so in York, where over 2000 years of human endeavour have usually resulted in a large residual component to any post-Roman assemblage. This makes the Low Petergate assemblage a very useful snapshot of 14th-century York.

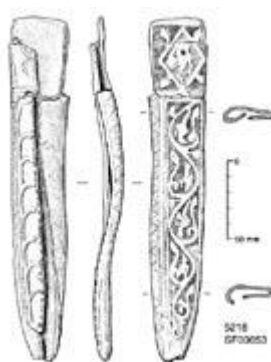
The sequence of medieval buildings was apparently occupied by artisans involved in a number of crafts and larger scale industries. The domestic life of their families is also glimpsed through their household waste, food debris and broken everyday items. This assemblage offers a rare opportunity to associate particular crafts with individual properties, and to chart the changes in activities over four or five generations. While it can never be stated with certainty that all material excavated on a property relates to activities carried out there, there is a patterning of the debris which is interesting. Excavations carried out fifty years ago by Peter Wenham (Wenham 1972) on parts of the same and adjoining properties went down deeper into post-Roman and Roman deposits and encountered similar material of medieval and Norman date. This adds a useful, wider, chronological perspective to the development of these industries as described below.

#### Tenement 1

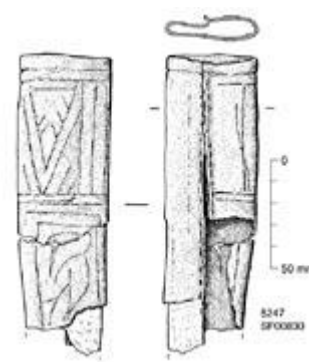
The remains of three successive buildings were recovered on Tenement 1. The earliest excavated deposits consist of overburden, pit fills and dumps in the backyard of what was to become No. 68 Low Petergate. The majority of the artefactual evidence from this and subsequent phases relates to leather and leather-working. Leather fragments and offcuts, associated mainly with shoe-making were recovered from Phases 1.2-1.8. Leather belts and decorated knife sheaths may also have been amongst the products of the leather workers. Much of this material is from deposits below the earliest excavated building (Building 1.3), and so it seems likely that this industry has earlier origins. This is consistent with Wenham's discovery of evidence for leather-working in association with pottery of the late 12th and 13th centuries.



Leather offcuts



Leather sheath



Leather sheath

It is of little surprise that this tenement should also produce further evidence for the activities of the horners identified there by Wenham. He excavated parts of a retting pit where horns were left to soak prior to use. Two hundred and fifty horncores were found in the bottom of

the retting pit, which he dated to somewhere in the later 13th or 14th century. The recent excavations also recovered numerous horn cores (below, left), some with clear cut marks (below, centre), from Phases 1.2-1.8, which are similarly dated deposits.



Horn cores



Cut horn cores



Leather shoe soles

Other craft evidence from Tenement 1 relates to non-ferrous (copper-alloy) metalworking, and takes the form of copper-alloy sheets, offcut fragments, casting moulds and slag. The evidence is that, at this stage, metal-working was only on a small scale.

The occupants of Building 1.3, therefore, were probably involved with leather working, horn-working and possibly some copper-alloy working through the later 13th and 14th centuries.

The subsequent buildings, Buildings 1.5 and 1.7, left little archaeological trace and have little associated artefactual evidence. Although equally little survived of Building 1.8, the associated deposits produced a wealth of finds. Pottery jug and cooking pot fragments, wooden bowl fragments and textile making equipment all give insights into the daily domestic activities of the occupants, while more horncores and leather shoe fragments (above, right) suggest continuation of the horn and leather working throughout the 14th century.

The quantity of evidence for leather and horn-working, however, is reduced and at least some may be residual from earlier levels. This will become clearer as the different, chronologically distinctive, styles of footwear are studied by the leather specialist. What is clear, however, is that later generations who occupied this tenement were increasingly involved in ferrous and non-ferrous metal-working. From Phase 1.8 onwards there is a greater range and quantity of evidence for these industries (ferrous and non-ferrous slag, casting debris, copper-alloy waste, strips, furnace lining, mould and crucible fragments).

## Tenement 2

Remains of two successive buildings, and their associated backyards, were encountered on Tenement 2. Only a very small part of the first building (Building 2.2) was found, as the rest lay outside the excavated area. It is believed to have been constructed sometime after 1250.

As with the earliest levels on Tenement 1, there is some evidence for leather- and horn-working in Phase 2.2 and a considerable amount more of both (below) in the deposits which built up when the building went out of use. Both ferrous and non-ferrous metalworking evidence are also significant in these deposits.

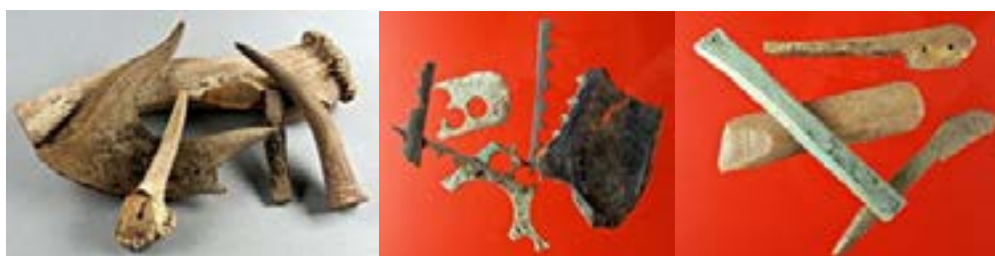


Leather offcuts

Leather shoe soles

Horn cores

Slight traces of another building (Building 2.4) were overlain by dumps and pit fills. These later deposits produced so many horncores that the continuation of this activity must seem likely. A small amount of antler working may also have been carried out on this (and possibly another) property (below left), although new forest laws restricting hunting made this raw material more difficult to obtain. Bone-working, specifically button making (below centre) and the manufacture of bone knife handles (below right) also took place.



Antler

Button-making debris

Bone knife handle roughouts

Of greater significance in these later phases is the increasing quantity of copper-alloy working evidence represented by bars, offcuts, spillage, waste, strips, moulds, crucibles and slag (below, left). Products include strap guides, buckles and brooches and other small personal items (below, right) although some larger objects such as cauldrons are indicated by large casting mould fragments.



Copper alloy slag

Copper alloy buckles

Ironworking was also important, as this tenement produced a large quantity of iron-working slag, especially from phase 2.5. Ironwork is represented by a variety of tools, textile processing wool-comb spikes, chain and nails, some of which might be products. Further investigative conservation and research of the metal finds will reveal the detail of these industries. Other minor craft activities are indicated by small amounts of bone and antler working debris.





Iron-working slag



Bone-working debris

The rubbish and cess pits on Tenement 2 give a number of insights into daily life in late 14th century Low Petergate. Pottery jugs and cooking pots, including two complete vessels (below) illustrate both kitchen and table wares (see pottery report); the hoops from a coopered cask or barrel serve to illustrate how liquids were stored. Gaming pieces show how free time was spent (below right).



Seigburg jug



Red Sandy Ware jug



Bone die and gaming counter

Some leather is clearly related to use rather than production; some leather shoes were clearly worn out and some knife sheaths must have been treasured items. The survival conditions in some of the pits were good enough for the preservation of fragile textiles which will be studied by textile specialists to see how the fibres and cloth compare with other medieval garments; it may be that evidence of dyes will survive. A spindle whorl shows that spinning was carried out in quiet moments and a glass linen smoother is evidence for the finishing or laundering of garments.



Fragment of textile



Glass linen smoother and spindle whorl

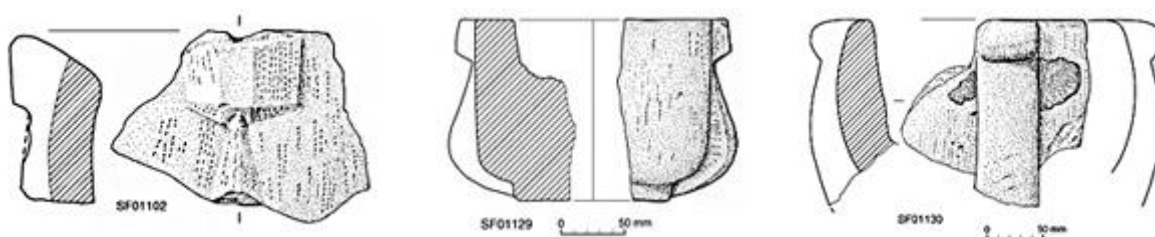


Worn leather shoe sole    Decorated knife sheath

### Tenement 3

This tenement provided the best evidence for metalworking - both iron-working and copper-alloy working. Right from the earliest deposits there is almost no evidence for horn-working or leather working. A very few scraps of leather survive, suggesting the scarcity of leather was not due simply to survival conditions, and the bony horncores would also have survived had they been present.

The buildings, ancillary structures, furnaces and other features on Tenements 3 all relate to successive phases of apparently contemporary and simultaneous iron- and copper-alloy working (Phases 3.1–3.10). There is little other domestic debris; fewer than a hundred and fifty sherds of pottery were recovered from these deposits, together with fragments of mortars and fragments of wooden bowls (currently undergoing conservation treatment). The dates all suggest that the metalworking occupied most of the 14th century.



Stone mortars – click on thumbnails for full drawings

The ferrous and non-ferrous metal-working debris itself is impressive in scale and range. There are relatively large quantities of slag as well as crucibles, moulds, waste, offcuts, spillage etc and a range of products similar to what was found elsewhere on the site.



Crucible fragments

Crucible fragment

Copper alloy sheets



Copper alloy scraps

Copper alloy strips

Copper alloy wire



Copper alloy rings

Copper alloy buckles

#### Tenement 4

A complex sequence of occupation and industrial deposits was encountered wherever Tenement 4 was investigated in the main excavation and in the service trench. The division of the medieval levels into multiple phases (4.1-4.15) represents an attempt to separate these different structural episodes. The pottery, however, suggests that there was little chronological distinction between them; the lowest deposits (Phase 4.3/4.4) are of late 13th or early 14th century date and phases 4.16/4.17 are probably no later than early 15th century; this again emphasizes that the excavations mainly encountered 14th century deposits.

Only the early phases here (Phase 4.3 and 4.4) contain a few horncores, hinting again that this industry may have been of greater significance in the first half of the 14th century rather than the second, and may have had earlier origins. There is no leather working evidence, although this is perhaps due to survival conditions.

As in Tenement 3, the industrial evidence is dominated from the start by ferrous and non-ferrous metal-working evidence. The backyards of this property produced the greatest quantity of iron-working slag, mostly from Phases 4.4-4.8 after which it tails off. This is also true of the evidence from the service trench. Otherwise the evidence is much as before, with greater quantities of material in this tenement than in Tenement 3. The range of products is also similar and once again it appears that ferrous and non-ferrous industries were carried out



side by side. There is very little ordinary domestic debris, only pottery and an occasional mortar fragment. The pottery is heavily sooted, presumably from contact with the industrial debris with which they were discarded. One or two items show a lighter side of life, such as the tuning peg from a stringed instrument and a buzz bone. A ceramic insect trap is an unusual ceramic form.



Bone tuning peg      'Buzz bone'

### Summary

The Low Petergate excavations offered a rare and valuable opportunity for extending our understanding of medieval York. The combination of a well stratified sequence, good dating evidence and a narrow time-frame, together with the richness of the artefactual evidence, makes this a significant site for understanding the turbulent years of the 14th century and further study is merited.

Research by scholars both in York and elsewhere will continue on the leather, the animal bones, the pottery, the textiles and the metal-working evidence. As the results become available and their significance in the wider context of medieval archaeology becomes clear, this website will be augmented and developed.

What has emerged is a picture of four medieval properties occupied by skilled artisans working in a range of crafts and industries. These included making and repairing shoes and other leather goods; and preparing and working with animal horn, antler and bone to produce, amongst other things, buttons and handles for knives. The full range of the horners' skill will sadly never be known as horn is very unstable and rarely survives. Whether the blades for these knives were made by the iron-workers living next door might become clear as the ironwork is researched. It equally possible that the the leather straps and belts would have been fitted with the copper-alloy strap guides and buckles made by neighbours. Their products also not only provided the housewife with brooches and buckles for her garments, but also with cooking cauldrons to use alongside her range of pottery utensils. As well as cooking, domestic activities would have included brewing, spinning, sewing, laundry and many other

household chores while music and gaming filled the few moments of relaxation. This assemblage offers evidence of all these aspects of life.

What is striking is that many of the industrial activities were both noxious and potentially dangerous. Retting pits and discarded animal parts must have produced bad smells and a risk to health, whereas furnaces and hearths adjacent to timber building were obvious fire risks. Yet all this took place only a hundred metres from the Minster, right in the heart of the medieval city.

## 8 CONCLUSIONS

By Ben Reeves

### The domestic buildings along Low Petergate

It was not possible during the excavation to ascertain any link between the standing buildings and the below-ground structures. The standing buildings are possibly contemporary only with the 15th-century and later phases of the below-ground archaeology.

The building survey supports the RCHMY interpretation that parts of the buildings fronting on to Low Petergate date from the 15th century and that they were substantially altered in later centuries. The survey has refined previous interpretation of the buildings by contributing considerably more detail about the overall development of the structures. It has also highlighted particular aspects, such as the surviving remains of a probable 15th-century mullion window in the north-east elevation of Building B, a feature that rarely survives in buildings of this date (Hall 2001, 83). The original 15th-century buildings would probably have had a shop front, possibly with a ground floor workshop, and domestic quarters above.

### The excavated building remains

Although less extensive, the remains of the workshop buildings at 62-68 Low Petergate are broadly similar to other medieval building foundations excavated in York (Addyman 1979). Here at Low Petergate the earliest foundations, as in the 13th-century Building 1.3, were made from timber sill beams set upon piles, or comprised timber sills within slots cut directly into the ground surface, as in the 14th-century Building 4.5. These, along with foundations investigated by Wenham, were comparable to those of similar date found at the Bedern (Hall 2001, 86) and at Coppergate (Addyman 1979, 73).

The earlier timber foundations were replaced by stone and brick sill walls, with the building above the sill wall constructed with timber framing. This pattern of construction can be seen elsewhere in York, both in excavated structures and surviving medieval buildings where timber frame building was the most prevalent construction method

### 8.1 Industry

There were multiple phases of what are interpreted as workshop buildings in the area behind the street frontages. The boundaries between the tenements appear to have remained relatively constant during the medieval, post-medieval and modern periods, although there is evidence that could be interpreted as suggesting that on some occasions adjoining tenements lay within a single tenancy.

Evidence for three urban industries was found at 62-68 Low Petergate; horn, leather and metal working.

It seems probable that there was some degree of interactivity between the industries represented at 62-68 Low Petergate. Metalworking, horn working and leather working were occurring in adjacent backyards, so it is likely that if, for example, knife blades were produced by a smith working in one tenement, the other components such as handles and sheaths might be made by the horn and leather workers in the neighbouring tenements. A fourteenth-century cutler working in Low Petergate would probably assemble these parts and presumably sell them in their own shop (Swanson 1989, 69). The shops fronting onto Low Petergate probably stocked all manner of everyday domestic leather, horn and metal objects made by artisans working close by in the tenements at the rear of the properties.

#### Horn-working

As with the leather-working activity at 62-68 Low Petergate, there was no structural evidence found during the 2004 excavation that could be associated with horn working.

The dating and the quantities of horn cores from the earlier phases in Tenement 1 are consistent with Peter Wenham's findings from the 1957-8 excavations. Horn is a malleable and versatile material that can be worked until it is thin enough to be transparent, and was put to multiple uses. It is also a very unstable material and some of the objects made may not survive, so the full range of objects being manufactured may never be known. It is clear from the finds assemblage that small everyday objects such as buttons and knife handles were being made.



#### Leather-working

During the 14th and 15th centuries York built a strong reputation as the primary regional centre for high quality leather goods. Evidence from excavated sites and historical records shows that, during this period, the leather working was a major industry and played a considerable part in the city's economy (Hall, in prep). The assemblage of leather finds from Petergate indicates that leatherworking was an important part of the artisanal activity in the area between Hornpot Lane and Low Petergate; however, no structural evidence was found that could be confidently related to the leatherworking activity.

All of the leather recovered during the excavation came from back-yard cess pits and dumped deposits. The leather was mainly found in the earlier, late 13th - early 14th-century, phases of Tenements 1 and 2, and the activity was found to be both earlier and later than the earliest building foundations. The leather comprised mainly off-cuts and discarded items such as shoes and scabbards, parts of which appeared to have been cut out and re-used, as if by cordwainers.

Evidence from the 2004 excavation indicates that the artisans were producing everyday personal items such as shoes, scabbards and belts. They may also have been re-using leather

to make new objects and possibly repairing old shoes for re-sale in the shops fronting on to Low Petergate. Evidence for similar activities has been found elsewhere in leather assemblages in York and more detailed analysis of the Low Petergate assemblage will provide a more detailed understanding of how the activity and the objects compare to that in other areas of the City (Mainman 2003, 3255).



### Metal-working

The evidence of manufacturing debris and discarded items reveals that a diverse range of both iron and copper-alloy objects was made at 62-68 Low Petergate. This use of a variety of raw materials is standard in the archaeological record from medieval York, and has been seen, for example, at the industrial site investigated in St Andrewgate (Finlayson 2004). These activities were focussed in Tenements 3 and 4, although there was also some evidence from Tenements 1 and 2. In particular, quantities of small finds, slag, crucibles and mould fragments were recovered. Additionally, and unlike the evidence for other artisanal activities at 62-68 Low Petergate, remains of related structures could be identified. Three phases of furnaces or kilns and various hearth features made from re-used brick and tile were discovered in the south-west part of Tenement 3. Similar structures have been found at other sites in York such as the Bedern (Richards 1993, 176). The precise function of each of these features is unknown, but they probably related either to the tempering or smelting of metals, or the firing of clay moulds. Considering that no slag concretions were found within the features, the latter seems more probable.

The evidence at 62-68 Low Petergate indicates that the metal-working industry was intensive here during the 14th and 15th centuries. The kinds of objects made varied from small items such as strap guides to every day cooking utensils such as copper alloy pots. During the 14th and 15th centuries most households would have at least one metal cooking pot, but the more

affluent might have had several metal cooking utensils for use in the kitchen (Swanson 1989, 74). During this period workshop buildings were altered and re-built frequently, possibly reflecting the changing commercial requirements of successive tenants of the site.

Overall, this investigation has contributed significant detail to our knowledge of medieval life at the heart of York, casting welcome additional archaeological light on the ambience of a range of what were standard medieval urban industrial activities.



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