

“OIL IN THE BONES”

Remedial Strategy Development and Implementation in the context of Nationally Significant Archaeology

Abstract

Geo² Remediation Ltd were invited by a luxury property developer to provide specialist in-situ remediation expertise for a complex site remediation scheme in the City of York. Serious challenges existed on site from both inorganic (asbestos and industrial made ground) and organic (free fuel oil and hydraulic oil plume) contaminants. The remediation has to be done in a way which would respect **nationally significant archaeology** underlying and local to the site. Agreement on the final remediation strategy involved complex multi-party negotiations balancing the needs of both Environmental and Archaeological stakeholders.

The remediation required targeted removal of **deeply buried oil structures** on-site (hydraulic jacks and nine fuel oil tanks), hotspot excavation and free phase skimming. The site was future proofed with a design including zoned gas membranes and sheet piling. The scheme was designed to **protect and preserve** the sensitive Roman and Viking heritage below the site for future generations!

The project, now in the final stages of completion was considered to be a **“great example of best practice and collaboration”** by the City Archaeologist given the negotiations around the specific and unusual regulatory demands on the project.

Site History

The site, an architecturally listed, asbestos clad former vehicle maintenance garage, is located in an area of nationally significant archaeological interest immediately alongside the River Foss, York. This area is one of the **key interest areas for Roman occupation of Britain and later Viking invasion** and settlement and building of the Medieval City of York. Our client, a prestigious hotel developer, instructed Geo² to provide specialist remediation solutions.

Site Geology and Hydrogeology

The soils under the site were found to be a mix of (Medieval to present) **deep, soft and putrid water-logged silts** (~8m below ground level) bearing historic river revetments and significant organics, the occasional **skeleton and medieval pig!** These are underlain by a clay (Roman) aquitard protecting a principal aquifer in the sandstone below the City.





Remedial Solutions

From these complicated negotiations, Geo² implemented a strategy including:

- Piled barrier installation along the River face of the site to separate oils from the river;
- Specialist decommissioning and removal of oil infrastructure;
- Excavation and removal of shallow oil hotspots;
- Excavation of metalliferous and asbestos bearing made grounds;
- Pumped recovery of shallow groundwater plumes;
- Risk modelling and monitoring to enable safe natural degradation of the oil plumes on site.

Moving Forwards

The site will retain a series of monitoring boreholes for long-term groundwater monitoring in the York region. These will check that the remediation has been successful in years to come, and the archaeology of the site is being preserved for future generations after the development is finished.

Remediation Success

Our collaborative and sustainable approach to this challenge delivered the best outcome for the client, balancing the needs of our project partners in regenerating the site, preserving the archaeology and protecting the environment.



“ It strikes me that this project is an example of best practice in remediation, archaeological methodology and heritage management. It demonstrates how potentially conflicting requirements have been addressed and resolved through excellent team work and communication..... A conceptual approach and practical methodology has been produced and implemented that takes account of these objectives and has led to removal of contamination with an acceptable degree of disturbance and minimal destruction of significant archaeological deposits”.

The City Archaeologist in York

For further information, please contact:

Geo² Remediation Ltd: Coniston House · Louisa Street · Idle · West Yorkshire · BD10 8NE.
Tel: 0113 257 5397 · Contact: info@geo2.co.uk · www.geo2.co.uk