

A corner of Roman York has been revealed during the creation of a new sandwich shop and cafe alongside Bootham Bar. Parts of the defences of the Roman legionary fortress Eburacum can be seen through a glass floor installed at Croque Monsieur, which is set to open shortly.

The fragment of stone wall formed part of the fortress wall built in the 2nd century AD, said city archaeologist John Oxley. "Today the wall stands approximately one metre high; it would originally have been at least four metres high," he said. "The stone is magnesian limestone, quarried in the Tadcaster area. It would have been taken by cart from the quarries to the River Wharfe and then brought to York by boat." He said a gateway was first constructed on the site in 71AD by the 9th Legion when it moved into the Vale of York during campaigns against the Brigantes.

He believed the gateway and wall probably survived into the 12th century when Bootham Bar was constructed. The remains were revealed and then recorded in 1910 during building works to create public toilets which formerly occupied the site, but the wall was then hidden away in a shallow basement under the men's toilet for more than 100 years.

"The replacement of the toilet facilities and creation of a new shop provided the opportunity to reveal this fascinating part of the Roman fortress defences to residents and visitors to York," he added. The shop and cafe is being opened by Chris Hartley and Colin Mustoe, who opened the city's first Croque Monsieur in Fulford Road earlier this year. Mr Hartley said the kitchens at Fulford Road would supply the city centre shop and at least one more, which he planned to open

in York. He said the redevelopment of the Bootham Bar site had included the opening up of a window from the Bar which had been filled in for many decades, which gave passersby a view into the shop.