

**ROYAL COURTS OF JUSTICE  
STREETSCAPE IMPROVEMENTS,  
LONDON**

**AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING  
BRIEF**

**ISSUED DOCUMENT**

**LOCAL PLANNING AUTHORITY:  
CITY OF WESTMINSTER**

**PLANNING APPLICATION:  
11/05848/FUL**

**LISTED BUILDING CONSENT APPLICATION:  
11/05849/LBC**

**SITE CODE: STR11**

**PCA REPORT NO: 11156**

**DECEMBER 2011**





**PRE-CONSTRUCT ARCHAEOLOGY**

DOCUMENT VERIFICATION

THE ROYAL COURTS OF JUSTICE  
STREETSCAPE IMPROVEMENTS, LONDON  
  
AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

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**THE ROYAL COURTS OF JUSTICE STREETScape IMPROVEMENTS, LONDON  
AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF**

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**Site Code:** STR11

**Central NGR:** TQ31008115

**Local Planning Authority:** City of Westminster

**Planning Reference:** 11/05848/FUL

**Listed Building Reference:** 11/05849/LBC

**Commissioning Client:** West One Infrastructure Services

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## **1 ABSTRACT**

- 1.1 An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited adjacent to the Royal Courts of Justice in the City of Westminster. The work was completed in phases between the 5<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> of September 2011.
- 1.2 The archaeological fieldwork monitored a geotechnical site investigation during which 29 Trial Holes, of varied dimensions, were excavated upon the site in order to determine the presence of services and the underlying ground conditions.
- 1.3 The watching brief aimed to record the nature, extent, date, character, quality, significance and state of preservation of any archaeological remains affected by the investigation, and to assess, where appropriate, the ecofactual and palaeo-environmental potential of archaeological deposits and features from within the site.
- 1.4 The only archaeological features encountered during the watching brief dated to the late post-medieval period, with structural remains observed in several of the trial holes. Made ground, which post-dated the masonry where it was observed, formed the bulk of the encountered material. A high number of services were also encountered, which were seen to truncate the made ground, or in many of the test pits made it impossible for the intended depth to be reached.

## 2 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited during the excavation of 29 Trial Holes as part of a geotechnical site investigation during works associated with the Royal Courts of Justice Streetscape Improvements scheme. The watching brief was undertaken in stages between the 5<sup>th</sup> to the 25<sup>th</sup> of September 2011. The archaeological project was designed and managed by Chris Mayo of Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd and was commissioned by West One Infrastructure Services. The Watching Brief was undertaken by Sarah Barrowman and Paw Jorgensen.
- 2.2 The site lies within the City of Westminster and is located in three areas adjacent to the Royal Courts of Justice; to the north in Grange Court and along Carey Street, to the east along Bell Yard and to the south of the site in the pavement area adjacent to the Strand (Figures 1 and 2). It is centred at National Grid Reference TQ31008115.
- 2.3 All of the Trial Holes were excavated by staff from Murphy Group, and were monitored by the attendant archaeologist.
- 2.4 The project was allocated the Museum of London site code STR11. Following the completion of the project the entire site archive will be deposited at the London Archaeological Archive and Research Centre under that code.
- 2.5 All works were undertaken in accordance with an approved Written Scheme of Investigation (Mayo 2011) and the following guidance:
- Greater London Archaeology Advisory Service: Standards for Archaeological Work: London Region, English Heritage, External Consultation Draft (English Heritage 2009)
  - Management of Archaeological Projects (English Heritage 1990)
- Prior to the start of the fieldwork PCA had produced an archaeological Desk-Based Assessment for the site (Butler 2011).

### **3 PLANNING BACKGROUND**

#### **3.1 National Policy: Planning Policy Statement (PPS5)**

- 3.1.1 In March 2010 the Department for Communities and Local Government issued Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment (PPS5), which provides guidance for planning authorities, property owners, developers and others on the investigation and preservation of heritage assets.
- 3.1.2 In considering any planning application for development, the local planning authority will be guided by the policy framework set by government guidance, in this instance PPS5, by regional policy (The London Plan) and by current Local Plan policy, in addition to other material considerations.

#### **3.2 Regional Policy: The London Plan**

- 3.2.1 Regional Policy is provided by policy 7.8 from The London Plan:

**Historic environment and landscapes**

**Policy 7.8 Heritage assets and Archaeology**

Strategic

- A London's historic environment, including natural landscapes, conservation areas, heritage assets, World Heritage Sites, Scheduled Ancient Monuments and memorials should be identified, preserved and restored.
- B Development should incorporate measures that identify, record, interpret, protect and, where appropriate, present, the site's archaeology.

Planning decisions

- C Development should preserve, refurbish and incorporate heritage assets, where appropriate.
- D New development in the setting of heritage assets, and conservation areas should be sympathetic to their form, scale, materials and architectural detail.
- E New development should make provision for the protection of archaeological resources and significant memorials. Where the artefact or memorial cannot be moved from the site without damaging its cultural value, the assets should where possible be made available to the public on-site.

LDF preparation

- F Boroughs should, in LDF policies, seek to maintain and increase the contribution of built heritage to London's environmental quality and economy while allowing for London to accommodate change and regeneration.
- G Boroughs, in consultation with English Heritage, Natural England and other relevant statutory organisations, should include appropriate policies in their LDFs for identifying and protecting heritage assets scheduled ancient monuments, archaeological assets, memorials and natural landscape character within their area.

#### **3.3 Local Policy: The City of Westminster's Unitary Development Plan**

- 3.3.1 Westminster's Unitary Development Plan (UDP) was approved by Full Council on the 24th January 2007, and parts of it were 'saved' by the Secretary of State on the 24th January 2010. The UDP is now made up of those policies that were 'saved'. The UDP will be replaced

by a Local Development Framework (LDF) under the planning system introduced by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

3.3.2 Development of the site is subject to the following policies in the UDP:

**POLICY DES 11: SCHEDULED ANCIENT MONUMENTS, AREAS AND SITES OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL PRIORITY AND POTENTIAL**

(A) Scheduled Ancient Monuments

Permission for proposals affecting the following Scheduled Ancient Monuments, or their settings, will be granted providing that their archaeological value and interest is preserved:

- 1) The Chapter House and Pyx Chamber in the Cloisters, Westminster Abbey
- 2) The Jewel Tower.

(B) Areas and Sites of Special Archaeological Priority and Potential

Permission will be granted for developments where, in order of priority:

- 1) All archaeological remains of national importance are preserved in situ
- 2) Remains of local archaeological value are properly, evaluated and, where practicable, preserved in situ
- 3) If the preservation of archaeological remains in situ is inappropriate, provision is made for full investigation, recording and an appropriate level of publication by a reputable investigating body.

Policy application

10.148. There are three categories of archaeological remains. In order of importance they are:

- a) Scheduled Ancient Monuments: nationally important remains, which are scheduled under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979
- b) Areas of Special Archaeological Priority: areas rich in archaeological remains, where ground works are likely to reveal archaeological remains
- c) Sites of Archaeological Significance and Potential: areas where archaeological remains are known or thought likely to exist.

10.149. These locations are listed in the Sites and Monuments Record maintained by English Heritage. The Areas of Special Archaeological Priority are: Lundenwic and Thorney Island; Paddington and Lillestone Villages; Marylebone Village; Tyburn Settlement and Ebury Village. The archaeological data produced by the Museum of London and English Heritage provide more detailed information, including further sites and areas of archaeological significance and potential within Westminster. Areas of Special Archaeological Priority are illustrated on Maps 10.3-10.7. Information on these and other sites of archaeological priority and potential are available from the Greater London sites and monuments record maintained by English Heritage.

10.150. In considering applications for development of land with archaeological potential, the City Council will require an archaeological assessment detailing the potential impact of development upon surviving archaeological remains. Should archaeological evaluation and investigations be required, it must be undertaken in accordance with a written scheme of investigation approved by the City Council. The Greater London Archaeology Advisory Service provides guidance papers detailing these procedures. With respect to policy DES 11 B (3), investigation may include a watching brief and, or, a full excavation.

10.151. The City Council will seek professional archaeological advice as appropriate and will encourage applicants proposing development to do the same. Where development may affect land of archaeological priority or potential, the City Council will expect applicants to have properly assessed and planned for the archaeological implications of their proposals. In this way the Council and the applicant will have



sufficient information upon which an informed planning decision, incorporating appropriate archaeological safeguards, may be based. Such safeguards normally consist of design measures to ensure the permanent preservation of archaeological remains in situ or, where that is not appropriate, archaeological rescue investigations in advance of development. The results and finds from archaeological investigations also need to be analysed, interpreted, presented to the public and curated for future use. Attention is drawn to the advice contained within the code of practice prepared by the British Archaeologists' and Developers Liaison Group.

#### Reasons

- 10.152. Archaeological remains are important evidence of the City's past and are a valuable historical, educational and tourist resource. They are finite and fragile; once lost, they cannot be recovered. The City Council considers that the archaeology of Westminster is a national as well as a local asset and that its preservation is a legitimate objective, against which the needs of development must be carefully balanced and assessed. The destruction of such remains should be avoided wherever possible and should never take place without prior archaeological excavation and record.
- 10.153. The most important archaeological remains are scheduled and are protected under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979. Where works to such sites and their setting are proposed, including repair, scheduled ancient monument consent is required.
- 10.154. The London Plan states at Policy 4.C.10 that boroughs "should give careful consideration to the relationship between new development and the historic environment including archaeological areas, including tidal foreshores..." National planning guidance is set out in PPG16: Archaeology and Planning, issued in November 1990.
- 10.155. The preservation of Westminster's archaeological heritage is a material planning consideration and applicants will need to show that proposed development is compatible with the objectives of the City Council's archaeological policy. The Council will wish to implement that policy under relevant legislation and statutory guidance and by means of legal agreements and planning conditions.

### **3.4 Archaeological Priority Areas**

- 3.4.1 The site lies within one of the five Areas of Special Archaeological Priority as defined by the Westminster Unitary Development Plan, covering Westminster, Lundenwic and Thorney Island. This covers a large part of the southern area of the City of Westminster, stretching along the Thames from the Strand to Smith Square.

### **3.5 Conservation Area**

- 3.5.1 The Strand Conservation Area incorporates the area from the River Thames through to the southern end of Kingsway and Lincoln's Inn Field, adjacent to the London Borough of Camden and the City of London. The riverside location of the conservation area has shaped its street layout and development. The area's built frontage to the river (the Embankment and Somerset House in particular) makes a significant contribution to the central Thames corridor.
- 3.5.2 Within this conservation area there are areas of distinct character. The two main routes are the Strand and the Victoria Embankment. The remaining smaller streets contrast in scale with

the formal redevelopment around Kingsway and the Aldwych. This includes the substantial complexes of Somerset House and King's College, the Royal Courts of Justice and the London School of Economics.

### **3.6 Scheduled Monuments**

3.6.1 The site of the proposed development does not contain any Scheduled Ancient Monuments.

### **3.7 Listed Buildings**

3.7.1 The Royal Courts of Justice buildings together with screen walls, gates, railings and lamps are Grade I listed. There are numerous other listed buildings and other listed items such as telephone boxes and lamps in the near vicinity in the Strand, Fleet Street, Chancery Lane, Carey Street, Essex Street and the Inns of Court.

3.7.2 A Heritage Impact Assessment has been prepared for the client in a separate report (Purcell Miller Tritton 2011).

3.7.3 Planning permission for the scheme had been applied for (application number 11/05848/FUL) along with Listed Building Consent (application number 11/05849/LBC).

## **4 GEOLOGICAL AND TOPOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND**

### **4.1 Geology**

- 4.1.1 The site lies within the London (or Thames) Basin consisting of a bed of chalk covered by marine sands, gravels and clay (i.e. Thanet Sands and Woolwich and Reading Beds), over which London Clay formed (Merriman 1990, 4). The drift geology of the site itself is shown on the British Geological Survey North London map as Floodplain River Terrace gravels overlying the London Clay. Substantial changes in the sea level occurred between cold glacial (low water) and warm inter-glacial (high water) phases. These changes produced a series of gravel terraces in the Thames Valley, which were separated by deep cuts caused by the scouring of the river. The gravel plateaux of the Strand and Covent Garden are both examples of these terraces. To the south are deep erosion slopes caused by subsequent action of the River Thames (Bowsher 1999, 82). The gravels are covered by brickearth which can be up to 2m in thickness.
- 4.1.2 No geotechnical work has as yet been undertaken on the site.

### **4.2 Topography**

- 4.2.1 The site lies on the north side of the Strand, a gravel plateau to the north of the Thames, which lies c. 300m to the south. The river Fleet, one of the lost rivers of London (Barton 1962), lies within sewers and culverts beneath Farringdon Street and New Bridge Street c. 500m to the east.
- 4.2.2 The site is presently occupied by pavements and road access ways into the Royal Courts of Justice.
- 4.2.3 To the north of the site adjacent to Carey Street the site lay at 18.84m OD to the west and sloped gradually down to 18.31m OD to the east. To the south along the Strand the site lay at c.14m OD.

## 5 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 5.1 The archaeological and historical background to the site is described in full in the Desk Based Assessment (Butler 2011). A summary of the potential for the site, as assessed in this document, is as follows:
- 5.2 There have been no prehistoric finds recovered from within the search area and only a smattering of finds have been found in the general area. Therefore the potential for uncovering prehistoric artefacts was considered low.
- 5.3 There is some evidence to suggest that burials and isolated structures along the line of the Roman road leaving Ludgate may be present. However, as it is likely that the present development will have a limited impact, the potential for uncovering in situ Roman remains was considered low to moderate, although residual Roman finds are a possibility as Roman finds have been found on the site previously.
- 5.4 The site is on the edge of the Middle Saxon settlement of Lundenwic centred on the Strand and Covent Garden area. The potential of finding remains of Middle Saxon date had been considered as low to moderate.
- 5.5 The site was built up in the medieval period and it is likely that cellars, wells, cess and rubbish pits and road and yard surfaces might survive. The potential for finding medieval remains was therefore considered to be high.
- 5.6 Documentary and cartographic evidence suggests that the site was heavily occupied in the post-medieval period. The area was covered by Elizabethan and later timber framed buildings, and prior to their demolition for the construction of the New Law Courts the houses within the site were described and illustrated by the Illustrated London News (December 15th 1866 issue). The area appeared to be a mixture of run down ancient buildings inhabited by the abject poor and houses of a more lofty status inhabited by lawyers and other more elevated personages. Old Boswell Court was the home of 'the quality' as were parts of Shire (later Shere) Lane, but other places such as Hemlock Court are full of lodging houses sleeping up to 30 persons a night and Newcastle Court was almost entirely filled with brothels. The site chosen to build the New Law Courts was therefore a mix of great poverty and wealth often living almost cheek by jowl. At the time when the site was cleared in the late 1860s it covered an area of seven and a half acres, and contained 33 streets, ways and courts, with over 400 buildings with a resident population of 4175. It took some time for construction work to begin once the site had been demolished with the foundations not being laid until 1871-2, with building beginning in 1874, and the opening of the courts occurring in December 1882.
- 5.7 As with the medieval period it is likely that cellars, wells, cess and rubbish pits and road and yard surfaces might survive. The potential for finding post-medieval remains was thus considered to be high.
- 5.8 It was anticipated that any archaeological remains on site would have a moderate value, being of regional importance and of enough significance to justify the area being deemed an

archaeological priority area.

## 6 METHODOLOGY

- 6.1 The watching brief was conducted according to a Written Scheme of Investigation prepared by PCA Mayo 2011). It aimed to determine and fully document the location extent, date, character, condition, significance and quality of any surviving archaeological remains.
- 6.2 A small mechanical excavator fitted with a flat ditching bucket, combined with hand digging by ground workers from Murphy Group, was used under archaeological supervision to remove non-archaeological soils down to the formation levels, though in many locations formation levels were unable to be reached due to the presence of services or structural elements. Natural deposits were not reached. A total of 29 trenches were opened across the study site (Figure 2). Details of the pits are as follows:

Trial Hole	Max Dimensions (m)	Max depth (m)
01	1.40m x 1.40m	1.00m
02	1.20m x 1.20m	1.00m
03	1.40m x 1.44m	1.00m
04	1.70m x 1.60m	1.00m
05	3.26m x 1.80m	0.80m
06	1.66m x 1.12m	1.36m
07	1.90m x 1.40m	1.10m
08	1.60m x 1.04m	0.80m
09	1.66m x 1.20m	1.00m
10	3.70m x 1.20m	1.20m
11	<i>Combined with TH10</i>	
12	1.80m x 1.00m	1.10m
13	2.00m x 1.24m	1.05m
14	1.56m x 1.92m	0.97m
15	1.54m x 2.00m	0.56m
16	2.64m x 1.06m	0.74m
17	2.20m x 1.36m	1.10m
18	1.90m x 1.28m	1.25m
19	1.12m x 1.00m	1.16m
20	2.42m x 1.26m	0.78m
21	1.54m x 1.58m	0.95m

<b>Trial Hole</b>	<b>Max Dimensions (m)</b>	<b>Max depth (m)</b>
22	2.50m x 1.20m	0.44m
23	<i>Not Undertaken</i>	
24	2.14m x 1.10m	0.44m
25	1.58m x 1.22m	0.53m
26	2.20m x 1.45m	0.99m
27	1.76m x 1.24m	0.37m
28	2.26m x 1.34m	0.45m
29	2.26m x 1.28m	0.89m
30	2.18m x 1.32m	0.96m
31	<i>Not Undertaken</i>	
32	1.80m x 1.52m	0.58m

- 6.3 All deposits were monitored and recorded by the attendant archaeologist. The deposits, fills, and features were assigned individual context numbers.
- 6.4 Heights above Ordnance Datum were established by a use of a detailed site survey drawing<sup>1</sup> provided by the client.

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<sup>1</sup> West One Drawing Number UA002876-H-100-GA-04. Rev A.

## **7 ARCHAEOLOGICAL SEQUENCE BY TRIAL HOLE**

### **7.1 Trial Hole 01**

7.1.1 The earliest deposit encountered in Trial Hole 01 was a loose deposit of made ground that was composed of mid greyish-brown silt [2], which contained pieces of ceramic building material. This extended in dimensions and thickness beyond all the limits of excavation and was encountered from 13.93m OD. This was sealed by the modern topsoil [1] of friable mid yellowish-brown clayey-silt that was 0.30m, extending beyond the sides of the trial hole, and seen from 14.15m OD.

### **7.2 Trial Hole 02**

7.2.1 The earliest deposit observed in Trial Hole 02 was a layer of 20<sup>th</sup> century made ground [4] which was composed of mid greyish-brown silty-gravels with frequent inclusions of ceramic building materials. This deposit extended in all directions and in depth beyond the limits of the trial hole, and was encountered from 13.79m OD. This was overlain by the modern existent topsoil [3], a friable mid greyish-brown clayey-silt, which was 0.34m thick and seen from 14.13m OD.

### **7.3 Trial Hole 03 (Figure 3, Plate 1)**

7.3.1 The earliest feature within Trial Hole 03 was the remains of a red brick wall [8]. Only the northeast facing side was visible in the section of the trench, and continued beyond it, with exposed dimensions of 1.46m in length by 0.20m in width by 0.40m in height. This was composed of frogged bricks spot dated to 1800-1900 (*pers. comm.* K. Hayward), which measured 215mm by 100mm by 60mm, laid in English bond with a grey-white lime mortar with shells and stones which also appear to cap the brickwork

7.3.2 Overlying the brickwork [8] was a layer of demolition rubble [7], composed of loose light grey concrete pieces with occasional fragments of ceramic building material and slate. This extended beyond the sides of the trial hole, was 0.50m thick, and was encountered from 13.18m OD. Above this was a made ground deposit [6], composed of loose light greyish-brown clayey-silt, with occasional inclusions of ceramic building material fragments, re-deposited pottery dated to 1740-1780 (*pers. comm.* C. Jarrett), and frequent gravels. This measured 0.10m in width, with a length and thickness beyond the limits of the excavation, with it having been observed from 13.20m OD. A layer of modern made ground [5] sealed this deposit and continued beyond the side of the trial hole, being composed of a firm light brownish-yellow to mid orangey-yellow clayey-sandy-gravels which was 0.36m thick and seen from 13.50m OD. Modern existent paving sealed the location.



#### **7.4 Trial Hole 04**

- 7.4.1 The only deposit encountered in Trial Hole 04 was a moderately compacted horizon of made 20<sup>th</sup> century made ground [9], formed of light greyish-brown sandy-silt with a moderate amount of ceramic building material fragments and frequent medium sub-angular gravels. This extended beyond all limits of excavation and was encountered from 13.28m OD. The existent paving sealed the location.

#### **7.5 Trial Hole 05**

- 7.5.1 Trial Hole 05 did not reach archaeological horizons due to the presence of services which meant that it was not excavated to depth.

#### **7.6 Trial Hole 06 (Figure 4)**

- 7.6.1 The earliest deposit encountered in Trial Hole 06 was a layer of demolition rubble [17] that potentially was associated with the land clearance that preceded the construction of the Royal Courts of Justice in the 1860s. It was composed of loose mid brown sandy-silt and brick rubble from 1750-1900 (*pers. comm.* K. Hayward), with very occasional fragments of York stone slabs and a moderate amount of small sub-angular pebbles. This extended beyond the sides and base of the trench, having been encountered from 12.34m OD.
- 7.6.2 A further layer of made ground [16] sealed [17]. It was composed of moderately compacted light brownish-grey to mid yellowish-brown sandy-silt with a moderate amount of crushed brick and pockets of lime mortar, and frequent sub-angular pebbles. This layer also extended beyond all sides of the trial hole, with a thickness of 0.50m, and was encountered from 12.82m OD.
- 7.6.3 The trial hole was sealed by modern concrete and the existent tarmac.

#### **7.7 Trial Hole 07**

- 7.7.1 The only deposit encountered in Trial Hole 07 was a loose layer of dark yellowish-brown very sandy-silt [18] which contained occasional ceramic building material fragments and charcoal flecks, and a moderate amount of small sub-rounded pebbles and decayed organic material. This extended beyond all limits of excavation, including the base, and was observed from 12.72m OD. This was believed to be of late 19<sup>th</sup> to early 20<sup>th</sup> century date, and represent a buried topsoil horizon, either relating to the adjacent tree or to earlier landscaping of the area.
- 7.7.2 Layer [18] was truncated by the trenches for the numerous services in the area and the trial hole was sealed by concrete followed by the existent surface.

## **7.8 Trial Hole 08**

- 7.8.1 No features or deposits of archaeological interest were uncovered in Trial Hole 08 due to the presence of multiple services which curtailed the excavation of the trial hole.

## **7.9 Trial Hole 09 (Figure 5, Plate 2)**

- 7.9.1 The remains of a possible surface [11] was the earliest feature uncovered in Trial Hole 09. This was composed of two courses of red bricks, measuring 80mm in thickness (the other dimensions were not clear, nor was it possible to see if they were frogged or not), with a light brownish-yellow sandy mortar with patches of white lime mortar. The remains had visible measurements of 0.25m by 0.24m and a thickness of 0.17m, and was encountered from 12.76m OD.
- 7.9.2 The brickwork was overlain by a deposit of made ground [10], which was formed of moderately compacted mid greyish-brown sandy-clay, with a moderate amount of inclusions of ceramic building material flecks and mortar. This extended beyond the limits of the excavation, was 0.78m thick, and was encountered from 13.37m OD.
- 7.9.3 The made ground was cut by service trenches, which in turn were sealed by the existent paving and associated bedding layer.

## **7.10 Trial Hole 10/11**

- 7.10.1 The earliest deposit observed in Trial Hole 10 was a very firmly compacted layer of mid orangey-yellow concreted sand [13], with a moderate amount of ceramic building material pieces and frequent medium sub-rounded gravels. This was recorded from 12.32m OD and formed the basal limit of the trial hole, extending beyond its edges. Due to the very compact nature of this deposit it is possible that it may have formed a surface horizon, though due to the small nature of the trial hole and a lack of other association this cannot be confirmed.
- 7.10.2 This horizon was sealed by a layer of made ground [12] formed of moderately compacted mid brownish-grey silty-sand with frequent inclusions of ceramic building material fragments and mortar flecks. This layer was 1.02m thick, encountered from 13.34m OD, and extended beyond all sides of the trial hole.
- 7.10.3 The trial hole was sealed by the existent paving slabs, and associated bedding layer.

## **7.11 Trial Holes 11 to 16**

- 7.11.1 The excavation of Trial Holes 11 to 16 did not reach potential archaeological horizons due to the presence of a high number of services, which had restricted and limited the depths that could be reached or extended beyond the depths of the trial holes.

### **7.12 Trial Hole 17 (Figure 6)**

- 7.12.1 The earliest feature observed in Trial Hole 17 was part of the brick footings for the existent building of the Royal Courts of Justice [22]. This was composed of yellow frogged bricks, measuring 220mm by 105mm by 65mm, laid in common bond, and bound by hard yellowish-brown lime mortar, with observed dimensions of 0.52m by 1.16m by 1.10m in height, and was seen from 13.66m OD.
- 7.12.2 This was post-dated by the associated construction backfill [23], a friable light to mid grey sandy-silt and mortar mix with frequent fragments of red brick and moderate amounts of small sub-rounded pebbles. This extended beyond the sides and base of the trial hole, and was encountered from 13.24m OD.
- 7.12.3 This trial hole was sealed by the existent paving of the Strand.

### **7.13 Trial Hole 18 (Figure 6, Plate 3)**

- 7.13.1 An east to west aligned brick wall [24] was the earliest evidence observed in Trial Hole 18. It was constructed of purple to brown bricks measuring 220mm by 110mm by 70mm, laid in a common bond with a hard yellow mortar. This wall was not fully exposed due to the presence of services and it continued beyond the limits of the excavation, though it had observable dimensions of 1.28m by 0.44m, a height of 0.50m, and it was seen from 13.09m OD.
- 7.13.2 A 0.70m thick layer of construction backfill [25] associated with the Royal Courts of Justice overlay the brickwork [24], extending beyond the sides of the trial hole. This was seen from 13.09m OD, was composed of friable light to mid grey sandy-silt and mortar with frequent inclusions of red brick fragments and a moderate amount of small sub-rounded pebbles.
- 7.13.3 The trial hole was sealed by the current paving of the Strand.

### **7.14 Trial Hole 19**

- 7.14.1 A deposit of made ground [14] was the only layer observed in Trial Hole 19. It was composed of moderately compacted mid brownish-grey silty-sand with moderate inclusions of fragments of ceramic building material and mortar. This extended by beyond all sides and the base of the trial hole and was observed from 13.90m OD.
- 7.14.2 This was overlain and sealed by the existent tarmac surface of the area, and its underlying concrete bedding.

### **7.15 Trial Hole 20 (Figure 7, Plate 4)**

- 7.15.1 The oldest feature encountered in Trial Hole 20 was the partially exposed/surviving remains of red brick footings [20]. The bricks measured 220mm by 60mm by 100mm, had shallow frogs and were bound by a hard light yellowish-grey sand mortar, with a tar like substance seen on the lowest course which may have been a waterproofing layer. A sample was spot dated to 1850-1900 (*pers. comm.* K. Hayward). The remains had observable dimensions of 0.33m in

length, 0.10m in width, 0.24m in height, and were recorded from 13.62m OD.

- 7.15.2 Above the brick remains was a layer of made ground [19], formed of demolition material composed of loose light yellowish-brown clayey-sand mixed with pieces of building material and mortar. This had dimensions of 1.28m by 0.46m, was 0.65m thick, and was encountered from 14.04m OD.
- 7.15.3 Service trenches were observed to truncate the made ground, and the trial hole was sealed by a concrete bedding layer followed by the modern tarmac surface.

#### **7.16 Trial Hole 21**

- 7.16.1 A made ground horizon [15] was observed at the base of Trial Hole 21. This was composed of moderately compacted light brownish-grey clayey-sand mixed with medium sub-angular gravels, with a moderate amount of ceramic building material and mortar fragments as inclusions. This extended beyond the side and basal limits of excavation, having been observed from 14.15m OD. This was cut by services and the trial hole was then sealed by the existent paving of Bell Yard.

#### **7.17 Trial Holes 22, 24 to 29, and 32**

- 7.17.1 Trial Holes 22, 24 to 29 and 32 all failed to exposed any horizons or features of archaeological interest due to having been located above either high concentrations of services or above the roof of the below ground structures associated with the Royal Courts of Justice.

## **8 INTERPRETATION AND CONCLUSIONS**

- 8.1 The only archaeological features of note observed during the Watching Brief were the masonry remains that underlay the made ground in several of the trial holes. It is most likely that these represent the remains of the last phase of buildings that were constructed prior to the clearing of the site in the 1860s to make way for the construction of the New Law Court. Spot dates of the sampled bricks from some of these structures would be in keeping with this interpretation, with earliest possible dates ranging from 1800-1850 across the samples. However, as the examples encountered were only partially exposed it is difficult to ascribe much certainty to the remains.
- 8.2 No features predating the late post-medieval period were encountered during the watching brief.
- 8.3 Should any further work be undertaken upon the site it is unlikely to impact upon significant archaeological horizons, providing it is not deeper than the 1.00m depth that was observed during the watching brief. However, should any further work extend to greater depths and/or extend across a wider area than individual trial holes exposed there is a potential for archaeological features and horizons to be uncovered.

## **9 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

- 9.1 Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited would like to thank West One Infrastructure Services for commissioning the work, and to the ground crew from Murphy Group for their assistance on site. Special thanks go to Ciaran Ward of Murphy Group for his help.
- 9.2 The author would like to thank Paw Jorgensen for his work in undertaking part of the watching brief, Chris Jarrett and Kevin Hayward for dating the finds, Hayley Baxter for the illustrations and Chris Mayo for his project management and editing.

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### Drawings

West One Infrastructure Services. *Royal Courts of Justice Streetscape Improvements – General Arrangement Sheets 1-4*. Drawing Nos. UA002876-H-100-GA-01; UA002876-H-100-GA-02; UA002876-H-100-GA-03; UA002876-H-100-GA-04, Rev A.



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Figure 1  
 Site Location  
 1:20,000 at A4



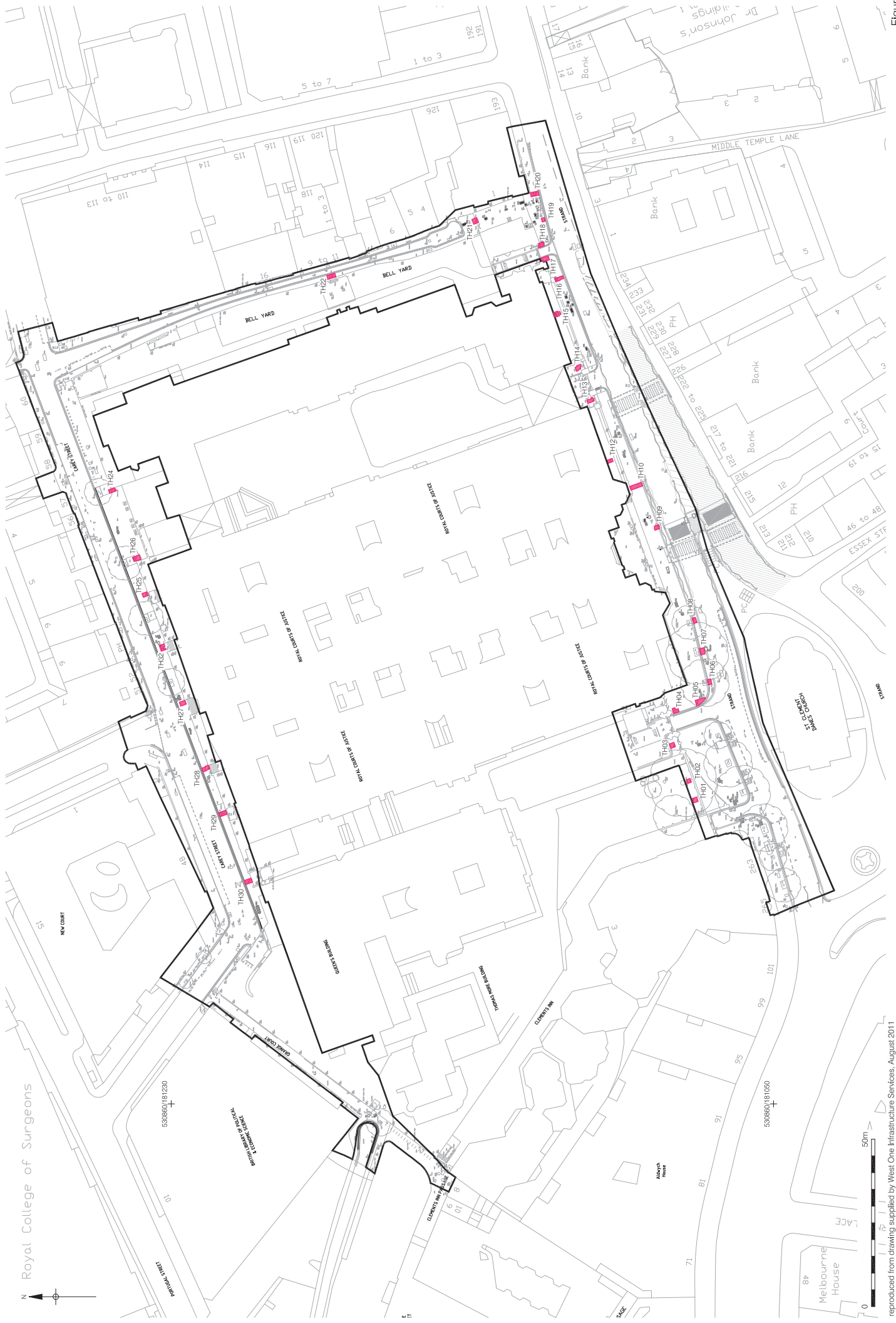
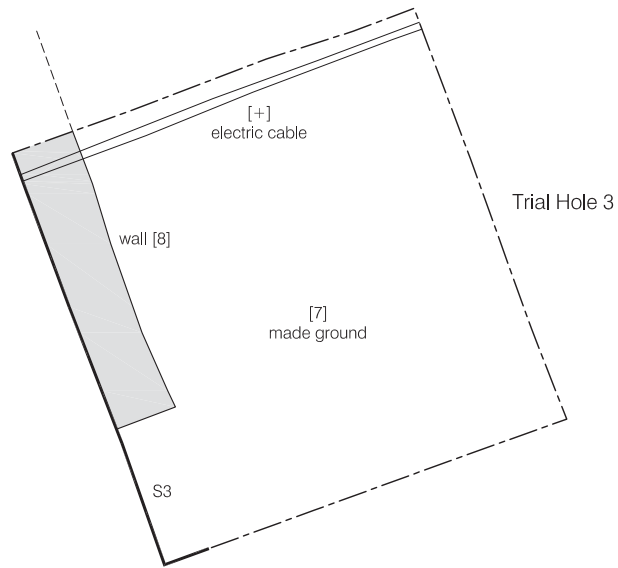
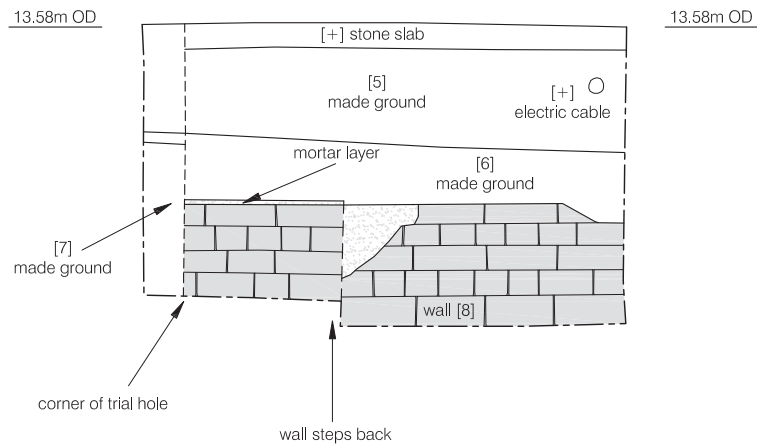


Figure 2  
Trial Hole Locations  
1:1,000 at A3



SE

NW

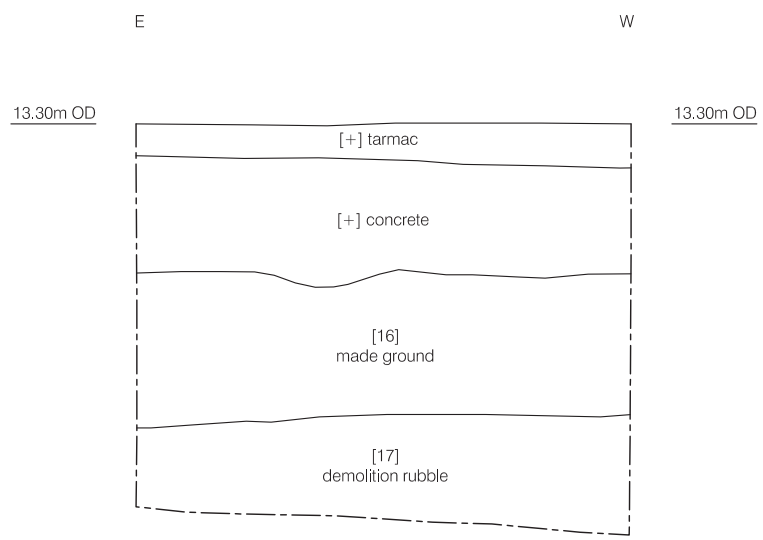
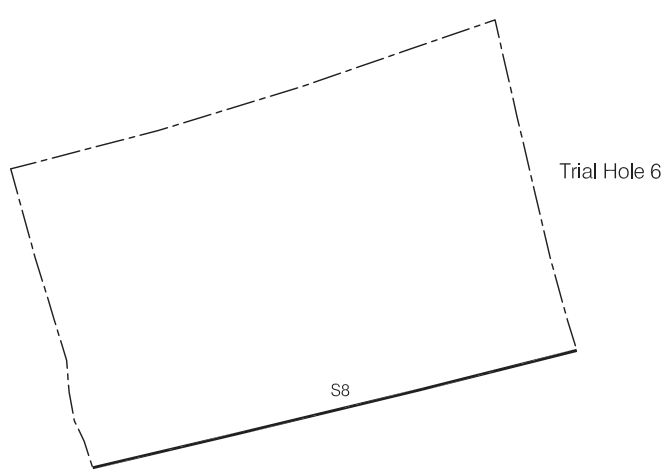


Section 3  
North-East facing  
Trial Hole 03



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Figure 3  
Trial Hole 3  
1:25 at A4

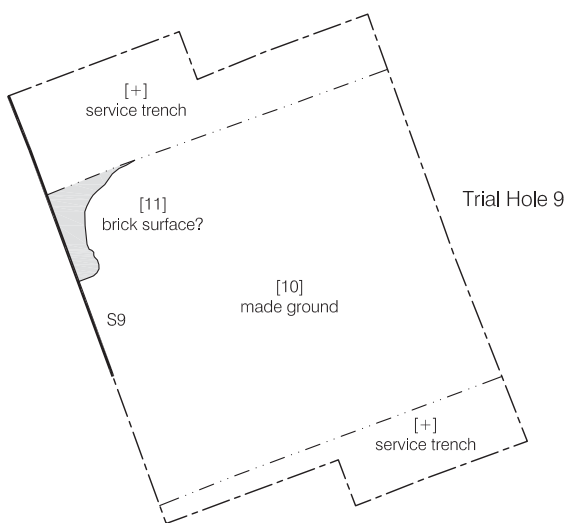


Section 8  
North facing  
Trial Hole 6

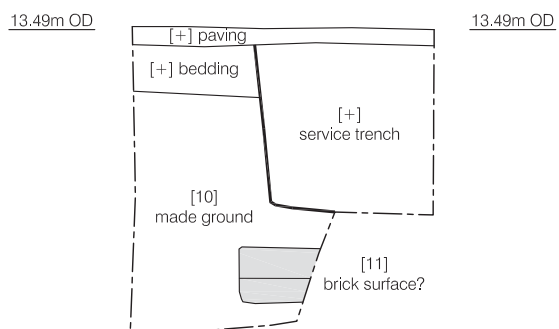


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Figure 4  
Trial Hole 6  
1:25 at A4



S N



Section 9  
East facing  
Trial Hole 9



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Figure 5  
Trial Hole 9  
1:25 at A4

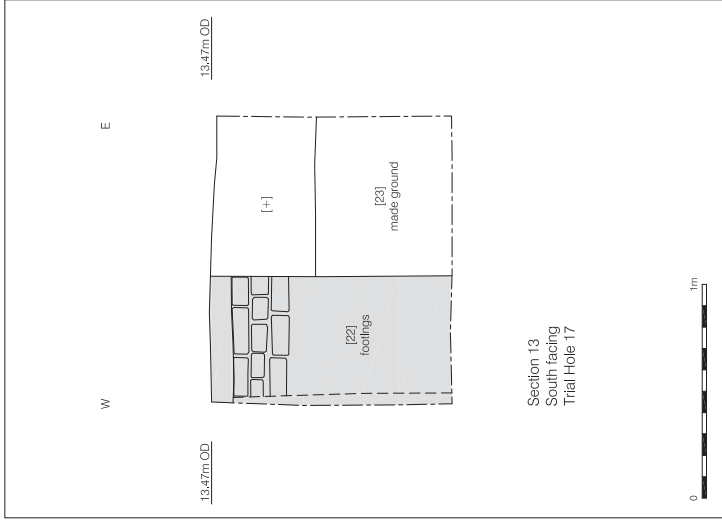
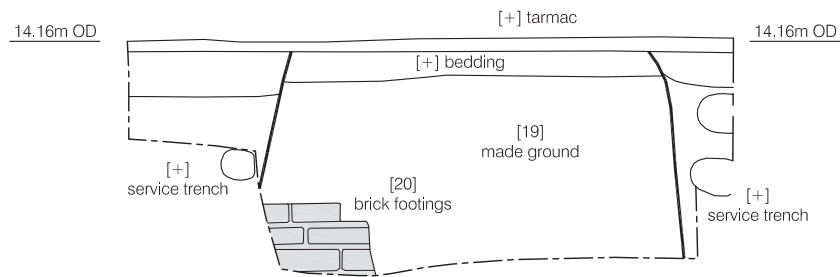
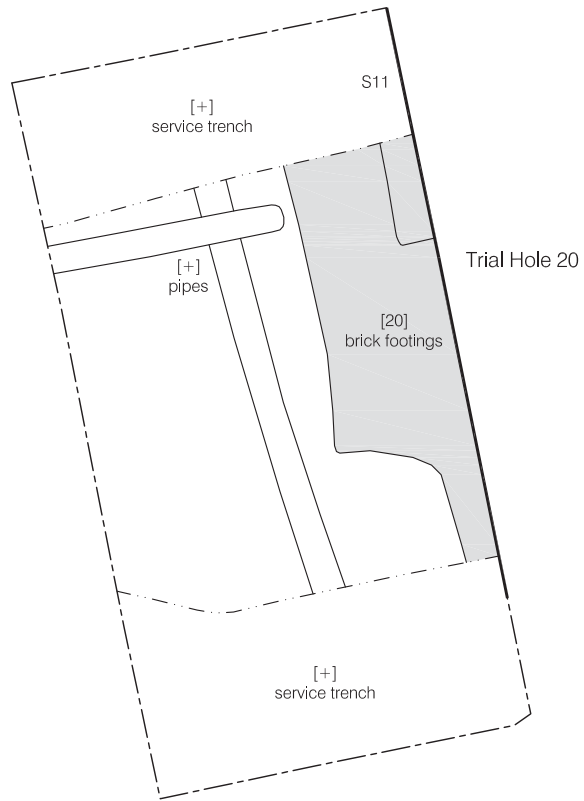


Figure 6  
Trial Holes 17 & 18  
1:25 at A3



Section 11  
West facing  
Trial Hole 20



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Figure 7  
Trial Hole 20  
1:25 at A4

## APPENDIX 1: CONTEXT INDEX

Context No.	Test Hole	Plan	Section / Elevation	Type	Description	Date
1	1	-	1	Layer	Topsoil	Modern
2	1	TH01	1	Layer	Made Ground	20th Century
3	2	-	2	Layer	Topsoil	Modern
4	2	TH02	2	Layer	Made Ground	20th Century
5	3	-	3	Layer	Made Ground	Modern
6	3	-	3	Layer	Made Ground	Modern
7	3	TH03	3	Layer	Made Ground	19th-20th Century
8	3	TH03	3	Masonry	Brick Wall	1800-1900
9	4	TH04	4	Layer	Made Ground	19th-20th Century
10	9	TH09	9	Layer	Made Ground	19th-20th Century
11	9	TH09	9	Masonry	Possible Surface	19th Century
12	10	-	10	Layer	Made Ground	19th-20th Century
13	10	TH10	10	Layer	Sandy Layer	19th-20th Century
14	19	TH19	6	Layer	Made Ground	19th-20th Century
15	21	TH21	7	Layer	Made Ground	19th-20th Century
16	6	TH6	8	Layer	Made Ground	19th-20th Century
17	6	TH6	8	Layer	Demo Rubble	19th Century
18	7	TH 7	12	Layer	Topsoil	19th-20th Century
19	20	-	11	Layer	Demo Rubble	19th Century
20	20	TH20	11	Masonry	Brick Footings	1850-1900
21	20	TH20	-	Layer	Clay Horizon	19th-20th Century
22	17	TH17	13	Masonry	Footings for the Royal Court Buildings	19th Century
23	17	TH17	13	Layer	Backfill/Made Ground	19th Century
24	18	TH18	-	Masonry	Brick Wall	19th Century
25	18	TH18	-	Fill	Construction Backfill	19th Century
26	15	TH15	-	Masonry	Brick Footing for Royal Court Building	19th Century





## APPENDIX 2: SITE MATRIX

	TH 01	TH 02	TH 03	TH 04	TH 05	TH 06	TH 07	TH 08	TH 09	TH 10/11	TH 12	TH 13	TH 14	TH 15
Phase 2: 19th to 20th Century Deposits Non-Structural Remains	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
	1	3	5	9	NFE	16	18	NFE	10	12	NFE	NFE	NFE	NFE
	2	4	6	NFE	17	NFE	NFE			13				
	NFE	NFE	7			NFE				NFE				
Phase 1: Structural Remains			8						11					
			NFE						NFE					

	TH 16	TH 17	TH 18	TH 19	TH 20	TH 21	TH 22	TH 24	TH 25	TH 26	TH 27	TH 28	TH 29	TH 30	TH 31	TH 32
Phase 2: 19th to 20th Century Deposits Non-Structural Remains	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
	NFE	23	25	14	19	15	NFE	NFE	NFE	NFE	NFE	NFE	NFE	NFE	NFE	NFE
				NFE		NFE										
Phase 1: Structural Remains		22	24		20											
		NFE	NFE		NFE											

### APPENDIX 3: PLATES



**Plate 1 - Trial Hole 03**



**Plate 2 - Trial Hole 09**



**Plate 3 - Trial Hole 18**



**Plate 4 - Trial Hole 20**

## APPENDIX 4: OASIS FORM

OASIS ID: preconst1-115337

Project details	
Project name	An Archaeological Watching Brief for the Royal Courts of Justice Streetscape Improvements
Short description of the project	An Archaeological Watching Brief was undertaken by Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited in phases between the 5th and 25th of September 2011 adjacent to the Royal Courts of Justice. 29 Trial Holes, of varied dimensions, were excavated upon the site. The only archaeological features encountered during the Watching Brief dated to the late post-medieval period, with structural remains observed in several of the trial holes.
Project dates	Start: 05-09-2011 End: 25-09-2011
Previous/future work	No / Not known
Any associated project reference codes	STR 11 - Sitecode
Type of project	Recording project
Site status	Local Authority Designated Archaeological Area
Site status	Conservation Area
Site status	Listed Building
Current Land use	Other 11 - Thoroughfare
Monument type	WALLS Post Medieval
Investigation type	'Watching Brief'
Project location	
Country	England
Site location	GREATER LONDON CITY OF WESTMINSTER CITY OF WESTMINSTER Royal Courts of Justice
Postcode	WC2A 2LL

Study area	13376.17 Square metres
Site coordinates	TQ 3100 8115 51.5135696845 -0.111918571093 51 30 48 N 000 06 42 W Point
<b>Project creators</b>	
Name of Organisation	Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd
Project brief originator	Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd
Project design originator	Chris Mayo
Project director/manager	Chris Mayo
Project supervisor	Sarah Barrowman
Type of sponsor/funding body	Developer
Name of sponsor/funding body	West One Infrastructure Services
<b>Project archives</b>	
Physical Archive recipient	LAARC
Physical Archive ID	STR 11
Physical Contents	'Ceramics'
Digital Archive recipient	LAARC
Digital Archive ID	STR 11
Digital Contents	'none'
Digital Media available	'Spreadsheets','Text'
Paper Archive recipient	LAARC
Paper Contents	'none'
Paper Media available	'Context sheet','Diary','Map','Matrices','Plan','Report','Section'

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<b>Project bibliography 1</b>	
Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	An Archaeological Watching Brief for the Royal Courts of Justice Streetscape Improvements, London
Author(s)/Editor(s)	Barrowman, S.
Date	2011
Issuer or publisher	Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd
Place of issue or publication	London
Description	A4 Bound Report
Entered by	Sarah Barrowman (sbarrowman@pre-construct.com)
Entered on	6 December 2011

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