

**AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL
WATCHING BRIEF AT
23 SAVILE ROW,
CITY OF WESTMINSTER**

SEPTEMBER 2006

DOCUMENT VERIFICATION

23 SAVILE ROW
CITY OF WESTMINSTER

WATHCING BRIEF

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**AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF AT 23 SAVILE ROW, CITY OF
WESTMINSTER, W1**

Site Code: SVL 06

Central National Grid Reference: TQ 2910 8090

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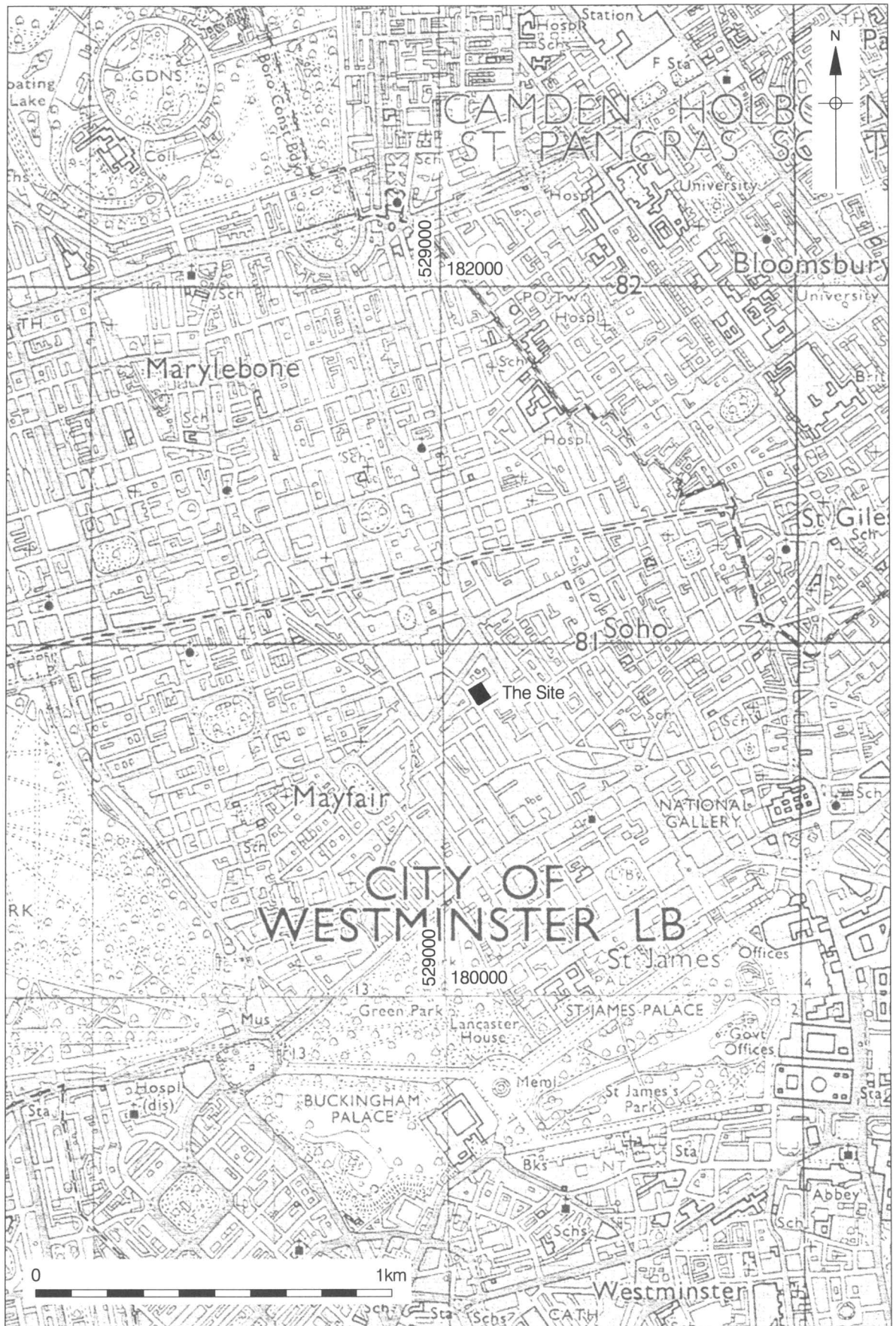
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1 ABSTRACT

- 1.1 This report details the results and working methods of an archaeological watching brief undertaken by Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited at 23, Savile Row, City of Westminster, W1. The central National Grid Reference for the site is TQ 2910 8090. The watching brief was undertaken between the 6th July 2006 and 11th July 2006. The work was commissioned by Concept Consultants.
- 1.2 Six trial pits were dug as part of a geotechnical investigation prior to the redevelopment of the building. They were all located within the basement.
- 1.3 Any archaeological deposits in the location of the trial pits had been entirely truncated by modern construction.

2 INTRODUCTION

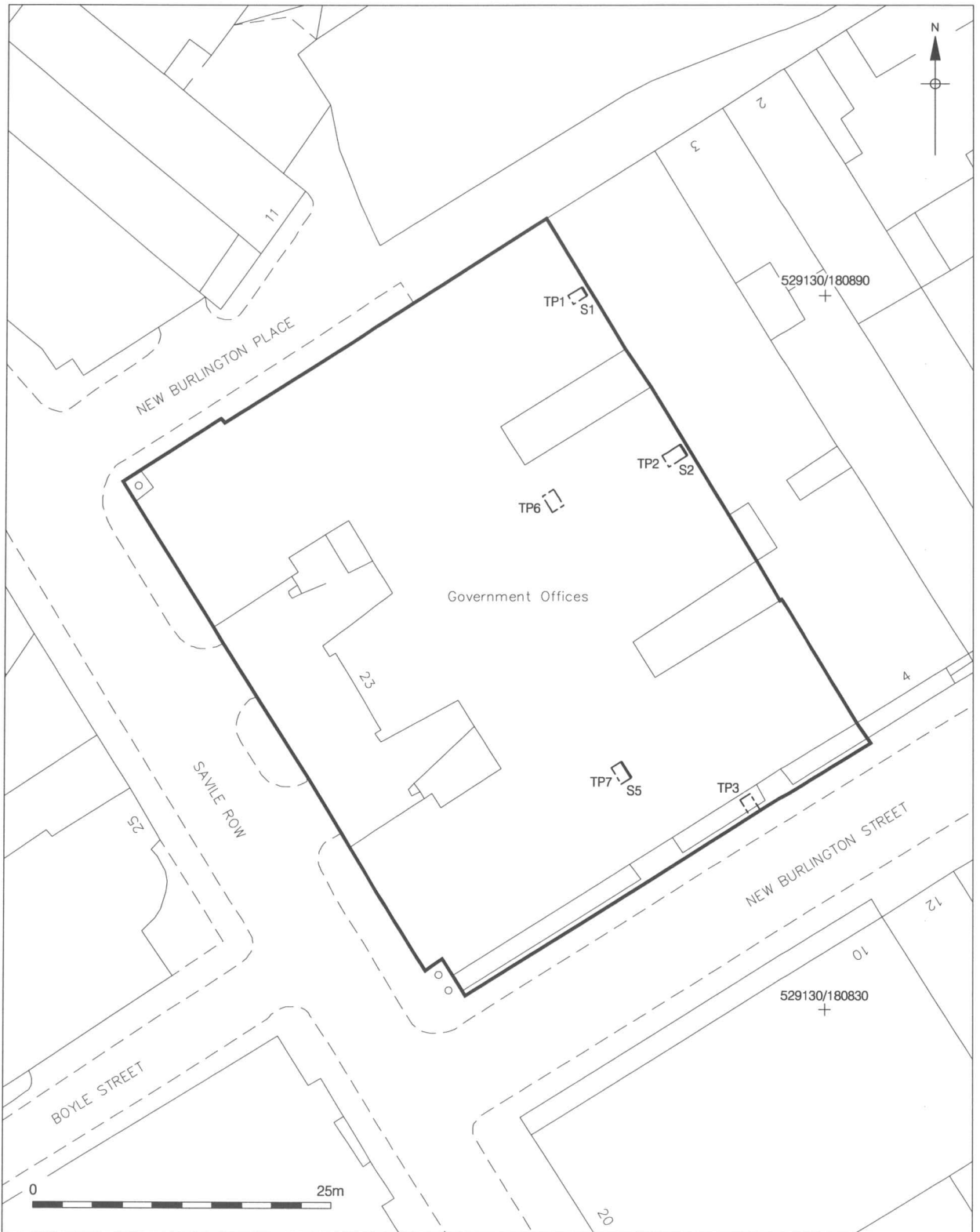
- 2.1 An archaeological watching brief was conducted by Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd. at 23 Savile Row, City of Westminster, W1 (Figure 1). The watching brief was undertaken between the 6th July 2006 and 11th July 2006, and was commissioned by Concept Consultants.
- 2.2 The site is located at the north end of Savile Row between New Burlington Place and New Burlington Street.
- 2.3 The geotechnical investigation consisted of six trial pits located within the upper basement level (Figure2).
- 2.4 The watching brief was project managed for Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd. by Chris Mayo and supervised by Amelia Fairman and Ashley Pooley. The site was monitored by Diane Walls of English Heritage on behalf of the LPA.
- 2.5 The completed archive comprising written, drawn and photographic records will be deposited at the London Archaeological Archive and Research Centre.
- 2.6 The site was given the code SVL 06.



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Figure 1
Site Location
1:16,000



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Figure 2
 Test Pit Location
 1:500

3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

3.1 Prehistoric

3.1.1 There is no evidence of prehistoric activity in the vicinity of the study site.

3.2 Roman

3.2.1 There is no evidence of Roman activity in the vicinity of the study site.

3.3 Saxon

3.3.1 There is no evidence of Saxon activity in the vicinity of the study site.

3.4 Medieval

3.4.1 There is no evidence of medieval activity in the vicinity of the study site. It has been presumed at this point that any activity in the area would have been agricultural and marginal.

3.5 Post-Medieval

3.5.1 Savile Row was constructed in the 1730s on part of the Burlington Estate. It was named after Lady Dorothy Savile, the wife of the 3rd Earl of Burlington. Almost immediately the street became a fashionable residential area. By the mid 19th century its extant reputation for fine tailoring began to be established¹.

3.5.2 In 1996 to the west of the study site an excavation was undertaken in an area that encompassed 40 - 41 Conduit Street and 1 - 2 Coach and Horses Yard (CDT 96). Beneath the modern surface natural gravels were cut by two post-medieval brick lined wells and a post-medieval rubbish pit in the southern part of the site, an 18th century well in the north-east corner of the site, and a possible channel in the yard area of Coach and Horses Yard as well as post-medieval levelling dumps. The site was mostly truncated by features that related to the contemporary buildings².

3.5.3 The excavation at 55-60 Conduit Street (CNT 95) found that the natural gravels in the north-west part of the site had been overlain by a deposit that consisted of brick

¹ Weinreb and Hibbert 1983

² Greenwood, Maloney, and Gostick (1997 & 1998)

fragments and crushed chalk. It was concluded that this material could represent demolition of a post-medieval building. However the natural gravels had mostly been truncated by the basement associated with the current building.³

3.5.4 At 9 Conduit Street (CNS 94) the natural gravels and brick earth were overlain by post-medieval dumps which were cut by wall foundations dating from the late 19th or early 20th Century⁴.

3.5.5 23 Savile Row appears to lie in an area that has a low archaeological potential, the surrounding area having been affected by both the vicissitudes of wartime bombing and modern building.

3.5.6 The current building at 23 Savile Row, Fortress House, was built in 1949/1950.

³ Greenwood and Maloney (1996)

⁴ Greenwood and Maloney (1995)

4 GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY

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 clays (i.e. Thanet Sands and Woolwich and Reading Beds), over which London Clay formed.

4.1.2 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.

4.2 Topography

4.2.1 The site lies 1.40km to the west of the present bank of the River Thames, formed by the Victoria Embankment, and 3.01km to the north of the present bank of the River Thames delineated by Grosvenor Road.⁵

⁵ Weinreb and Hibbert, 1983

5 ARCHAEOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY

- 5.1 In all trial pits (TP) the concrete slab was broken and removed by contractors. The manual removal of the underlying material was monitored (figure 2).
- 5.2 TP 1, situated in the north-western corner of the upper basement, extended 0.96m north-south and 1.70m east-west. It reached a depth of 1.14m before excavation was discontinued.
- 5.3 TP 2, situated at the northern edge of the car park in the upper basement, extended 1.10m north-south and 1.80m east-west. It reached a depth of 1.00m before excavation was discontinued.
- 5.4 TP 3, situated against the eastern wall in the north eastern corner of the basement, extended 1.00m north-south and 1.00m east-west. It reached a depth of 1.00m before excavation was discontinued.
- 5.5 TP 4, which was to have been situated in the south eastern corner of the upper basement, was abandoned.
- 5.6 TP 5 was not included in the watching brief.
- 5.7 TP 6, situated towards the centre of the car park in the upper basement, extended 1.60m north-south and 1.10m east-west. It reached a depth of 1.86m.
- 5.8 TP 7, situated within a corridor in the centre of the eastern side of the upper basement, extended 1.00m north-south and 1.60m east-west. It reached a depth of 1.60m before excavation was discontinued.
- 5.9 Trial pits and their contents were recorded in plan at 1:20 and in section at 1:10. The various backfills were recorded onto *pro forma* context sheets.

6 ARCHAEOLOGICAL DISCUSSION

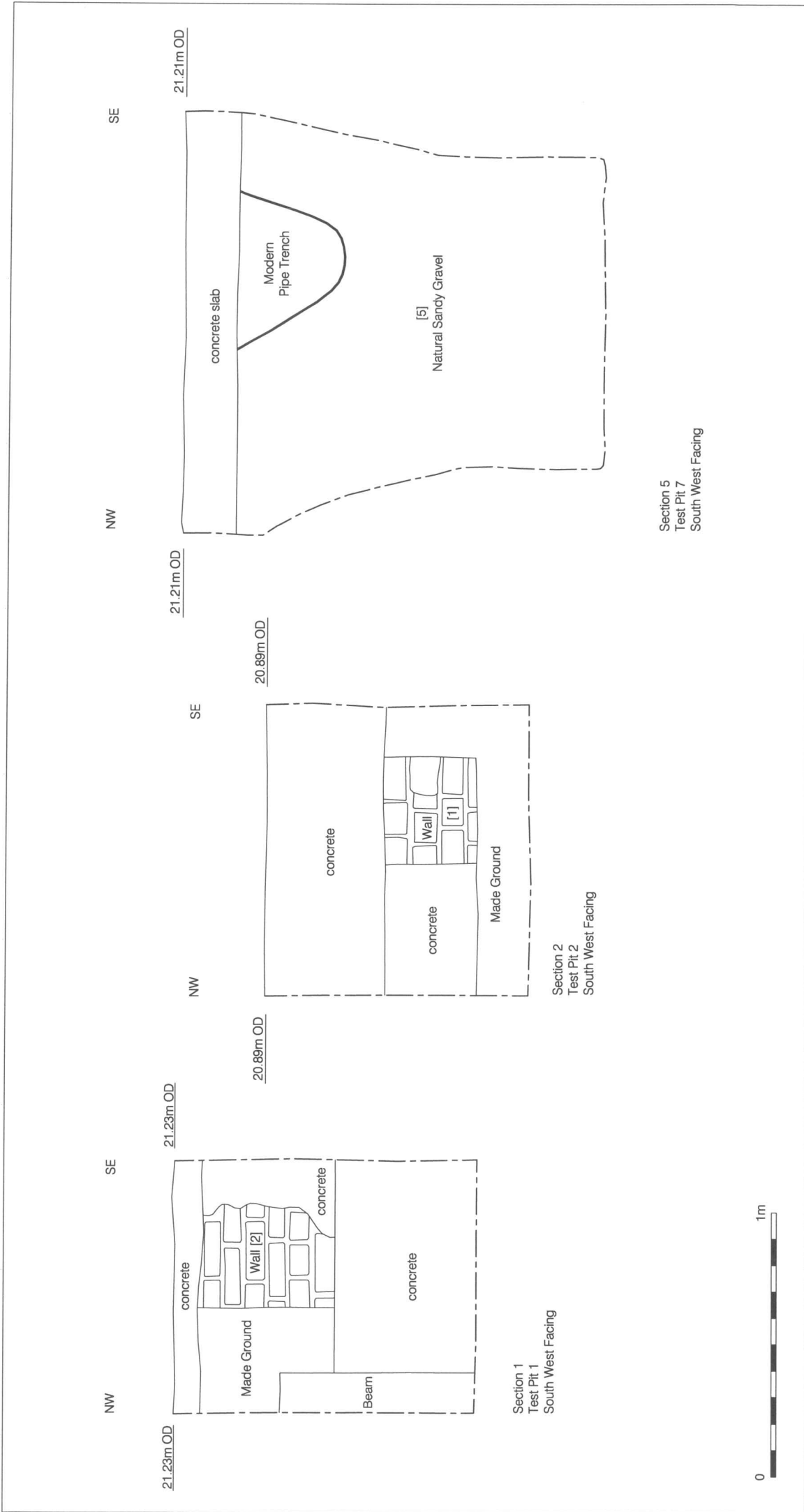
6.1 Phase 1: Natural

6.1.1 A natural deposit of weakly cemented dark brownish red sandy gravel with grit inclusions [3], [4] and [5] was seen in TPs 3, 6 and 7 respectively between maximum heights of 20.64m OD and 21.01m OD (figure 3).

6.2 Phase 2: 19th – 20th Century Remains

6.2.1 In TPs 1 and 2 masonry remains of a late 19th or early 20th century structure were revealed. They had been truncated by the post-war foundations of Fortress House and related to its predecessor. They comprised yellow stock brick foundation walls [2] and [1] respectively (figure 3).

6.2.2 Truncating both the natural deposits and the earlier foundations were the sub-basement installations of the post-war Fortress House, comprising groundbeams and sub-slab 'hoggin'. All trenches were sealed by the concrete slab floor of Fortress House (figure 3).



7 CONCLUSIONS

- 7.1 Although the TPs were of limited dimensions it is fairly clear that within the footprint of the foundations of 23 Savile Row almost all archaeological deposits have been truncated. The only surviving material relates to the foundations of an earlier building on the site, most likely the 19th century predecessor of the current Fortress House..

8 BIBLIOGRAPHY

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Greenwood, P, Maloney, C, and Gostick, T. J, 1997 'London Fieldwork and Publication Round-up 1996' in *London Archaeologist* Vol. 8 suppl.2

Maloney, C, and Gostick, T. J, 1998 'London Fieldwork and Publication Round-up 1997' in *London Archaeologist* Vol. 8 suppl.3

Weinreb, B, & Hibbert, C, (eds) 1983 *The London Encyclopaedia*, London

9 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- 9.1 Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited would like to thank Concept Consultants for commissioning the work and Richard Hughes of Ove Arup for his advice. Thanks to Diane Walls of GLAAS for monitoring the work.
- 9.2 The author would like to thank Chris Mayo for project managing the watching brief and editing the report, Amelia Fairman and Ashley Pooley for undertaking the watching brief and Hayley Baxter for the illustrations.

APPENDIX 1: CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

CONTEXT	TP	TYPE	DESCRIPTION
1	2	Masonry	Truncated brick foundation
2	1	Masonry	Truncated brick foundation
3	3	Layer	Natural gravely sand
4	6	Layer	Natural gravely sand
5	7	Layer	Natural gravely sand

APPENDIX 2: OASIS REPORT FORM

OASIS ID: preconst1-18346

Project details

Project name	23 SAVILE ROW, CITY OF WESTMINSTER, W1
Short description of the project	An archaeological watching brief was conducted by Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd. at 23 Savile Row, City of Westminster, W1 between the 6th July 2006 and 11th July 2006, and was commissioned by Concept Consultants. The site is located at the north end of Savile Row between New Burlington Place and New Burlington Street. The geotechnical investigation consisted of six trial pits located within the upper basement level. The watching brief was project managed for Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd. by Chris Mayo and supervised by Amelia Fairman and Ashley Pooley. The site was monitored by Diane Walls of English Heritage on behalf of the LPA. Any archaeological deposits in the location of the trial pits had been entirely truncated by modern construction.
Project dates	Start: 06-07-2006 End: 11-07-2006
Previous/future work	No / Not known
Any associated project reference codes	SVL06 - Sitecode
Type of project	Field evaluation
Site status	None
Current Land use	Industry and Commerce 2 - Offices
Methods & techniques	'Test Pits'
Development type	Urban commercial (e.g. offices, shops, banks, etc.)
Prompt	Voluntary/self-interest
Position in the planning process	Not known / Not recorded
Project location	
Country	England
Site location	GREATER LONDON CITY OF WESTMINSTER CITY OF WESTMINSTER 23 SAVILE ROW, CITY OF WESTMINSTER, W1
Postcode	W1
Study area	2184.00 Square metres
Site coordinates	TQ 2910 8090 51.5117610571 -0.139378895899 51 30 42 N 000 08 21 W Point
Height OD	Min: 20.64m Max: 21.01m
Project creators	
Name of Organisation	Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd

Project brief originator	Consultant
Project design originator	Richard Hughes
Project director/manager	Chris Mayo
Project supervisor	Amelia Fairman/ Ashley Pooley
Type of sponsor/funding body	Concept Site Investigations
Name of sponsor/funding body	Concept Site Investigations
Project archives	
Physical Archive Exists?	No
Digital Archive recipient	LAARC
Digital Contents	'Stratigraphic'
Digital Media available	'Images vector','Text'
Paper Archive recipient	LAARC
Paper Contents	'Stratigraphic'
Paper Media available	'Context sheet','Plan','Section'
Project bibliography 1	
Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
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