

**COLLEGE GARDENS,
WESTMINSTER ABBEY, SW1P 3PA**

**SUMMARY REPORT OF AN
ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING
BRIEF DURING GAS MAIN
REPLACEMENT WORK**

**LOCAL PLANNING AUTHORITY:
CITY OF WESTMINSTER**

PCA REPORT NO: 11941

SITE CODE: SYQ10

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PRE-CONSTRUCT ARCHAEOLOGY



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COLLEGE GARDENS, WESTMINSTER ABBEY,
SW1P 3PA

SUMMARY REPORT OF AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL
WATCHING BRIEF DURING GAS MAIN
REPLACEMENT WORK

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COLLEGE GARDENS, WESTMINSTER ABBEY, SW1P 3PA

**SUMMARY REPORT OF AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF DURING GAS
MAIN REPLACEMENT WORK**

Local Planning Authority: City Of Westminster

Site Code: SYQ10

Central National Grid Reference: TQ 30092 79377

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1 Introduction

- 1.1 Between the 18th and 20th of October 2012 Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd. conducted an archaeological watching brief during gas main replacement work in College Gardens, to the south of Westminster Abbey (Figures 1 & 2). The work was a continuation of a programme to replace old cast iron pipes with modern plastic ones, carried out to the west in Dean's Yard and The Sanctuary, and Little Dean's Yard, and reported upon previously (Boyer 2011).
- 1.2 This phase of the watching brief monitored the excavation of three trenches along the south side of a footpath within College Gardens (Figure 2; Plates 1-6), to the east of Little Dean's Yard and north-east of Westminster School. The western most of the three trenches (Trench 102) lay a little less than 50m east of the easternmost trenches previously reported upon (Boyer 2011, Trench 29), whilst the eastern end of the easternmost trench (Trench 100) lay a further 26m to the east (Figure 2).
- 1.3 The methodology employed was the same as that outlined in the previous report (Boyer 2011, 15) and involved the monitoring of the re-excavation of previously dug service runs and the recording of sequences preserved and exposed in the trench edges. The work was carried out according to a previously prepared Written Scheme of Investigation (Mayo 2010) and conformed to national (IfA 2008), regional (GLAAS 2009) and PCA's own (Taylor and Brown 2009) standards and procedures for archaeological fieldwork.
- 1.4 A five-phase chronological sequence had been established during the earlier work and in order to make the current observations compatible with those previously described, the same chronological sub-divisions were employed (Appendix 3).
- 1.5 The planning, geological and topographical, and archaeological and historical backgrounds to the project were discussed in detail in the previous report (Boyer 2011, 6-14) and it is not necessary to repeat these here. This report is a summary of the observations made during the latest phase of work and an attempt is made to draw the findings together with those of the earlier work.
- 1.6 Subsequent to the completion of the site work in October 2012 it was considered that some further work for the same scheme may be necessary, and thus the post-excavation work presented here was delayed. However it has now become apparent that further work is now no longer required, and thus this report presents the findings and is designed to conclude the archaeological project.

2 Watching Brief Observations and Phased Sequences

2.1 Introduction

2.1.1 The watching brief was carried out during the replacement of a c. 26m length of gas pipe in Little Dean's Yard, which involved excavation of trenches at three key locations along the service run (Figure 2). Trench 100 was an 'L-shaped' trench located at the eastern end of the run (Plate 2), where the east-west aligned gas pipe turned to the south. The trench measured 4.4m east to west and was 0.65m wide. It extended southwards for a further 1.2m at the eastern end and was excavated to a depth of 0.9m. Trench 101 (Plate 4) was located 3.25m to the west, was 2.35m in length, 0.6m wide and 0.6m deep. Trench 102 (Plate 6) comprised a dog-legged excavation at the western end of the run that measured up to 2.5m east to west, 1.2m north to south and was 0.85m deep (Figures 2 & 3).

2.1.2 The observations from the three trenches are combined here to provide an overall sequence, and one that is compatible with the sequence previously established. However, the dating of some deposits should be treated with a degree of caution as few dateable finds were recovered during the latest phase of work.

2.2 Phase 1: Medieval

2.2.1 The previous watching brief phase identified a fragment of medieval masonry in Trench 29 towards the western end of Little Dean's Yard but no *in situ* medieval deposits were identified during the latest phase of work. However, a fragment of Reigate stone moulding broadly dating to AD 1060 – 1600 and two fragments of tufa limestone mortar, also of medieval date, were recovered from a mortar and rubble layer [107] in Trench 100, though this material was probably residual as the layer has been provisionally dated to the 18th century (see below).

2.3 Phase 2: Late Medieval / Early Post-Medieval

2.3.1 Possibly the earliest deposit recorded during the latest work in Little Dean's Yard was a moderately compacted, mid greyish yellow, sandy mortar [112] recorded at the base of Trench 101. Only the upper 50mm of the layer was exposed (upper elevation 0.56m below ground level (bgl)), but it appears to have been associated with the construction of buildings to the north, probably during the late medieval or early post-medieval period. It was overlain by a 70mm thick deposit of moderately compacted, dark grey, silty clay [111]. In common with [112] this contained no dateable finds but a very similar deposit [124] was recorded in the base of Trench 102 at an upper elevation of 0.75m bgl. This contained an unglazed peg tile fragment, broadly dated to the period AD 1400 – 1700, a pottery sherd dated after 1580 and two fragments of animal bone.

2.4 Phase 3: 18th Century

2.4.1 Lying above layer [111] in Trench 101 was a thin deposit of moderately compacted, mid greyish brown, sandy silt [110], which appeared to act as bedding for a more substantial layer [109], a moderately compacted, mid greyish yellow, sandy mortar-rich deposit, 0.15m thick and recorded at an upper elevation of 0.30m bgl. This appears to have been essentially the same material as

[123] recorded in Trench 102 (upper elevation 0.51m bgl) and [106]/[107] recorded in Trench 100 (upper elevation 0.59m bgl) and although a small quantity of medieval material was recovered from [107] this was probably residual and the deposit was most likely to be of 18th-century date. This broad deposit appears to have been associated with demolition in the area, possibly of a building to the north. Layer [107] had also been underlain by another mortar-rich deposit [108], which may have been associated with demolition.

2.5 Phase 4: 19th – 20th Century

2.5.1 At the eastern end of Trench 102, layer [123] was cut by a small pit [122], which was only seen in section (Figure 3). It had slightly irregular sides and was at least 0.35m deep, extending below the base of the trench. The fill [121] was a moderately compacted, mid greyish brown, silty clay that contained a fragment of clay tobacco pipe dating to the period 1680 – 1710 and therefore probably residual. The function of the feature was unclear but it is possible that it extended significantly beyond the edges of the trench. At the west end of the trench, layer [123] was truncated by construction cut [119] for north to south aligned, masonry structure [120], which comprised a limestone slab set in concrete and surviving to a height of 0.42m (upper elevation 0.35m bgl). It appeared to be a foundation for a possible eastern wall of a former structure at the west of the service run in this part of Little Dean's Yard. The remainder of the construction cut was filled with loose to moderately compacted, crushed brick fragments [118].

2.5.2 On the south side of Trench 101 the top of a former drain, 1.11m across and constructed from yellow stock bricks [113], was recorded, which was sealed with slate after it had gone out of use (Plate 4), whilst in Trench 100, mortar-rich layer [106] was overlain by a very thin deposit of silty sand [105] which in turn was overlain by yellow sand deposit [104]. This was sealed by an extensive layer of moderately compacted, mid greyish brown, silty clay [103], up to 0.70m thick and recorded at an upper elevation of 0.20m bgl. The same material was recorded in Trench 101, where it sealed drain [113] and was much thinner but recorded at a similar elevation. Deposit [115] above layer [123] in Trench 102 also appears to have been similar material; it was up to 0.35m thick and also recorded at 0.20m bgl. Described as "subsoil" in the field this appears more likely to have been a general ground raising and levelling deposit to provide a level bed for surface materials. A fragment of Carrara Marble, probably a Victorian plinth from funerary or decorative monument was recovered from layer [103] and it is likely that the deposit dates to the late 19th or early 20th century.

2.5.3 In Trench 100, layer [103] was cut by a feature [102] at least 0.87m wide and 0.70m deep though only seen in section (Figure 3). It was filled with a moderately compacted, mid greyish brown, silty clay [101], though no dateable finds were recovered. The original function and form of the feature were unclear but it could have been a former service run or a planting feature, probably of late 19th- or 20th-century date.

2.6 Phase 5: Modern

2.6.1 At the western end of Trench [102], construction cut backfill [118] was partly truncated by a slightly irregular feature [117], only seen in section (Figure 3) but measuring 0.80m across and up

to 0.36m deep. It was filled with a moderately compacted, mid grey, silty clay [116]. The function of this modern feature was unclear but given its proximity to flower beds, it has been interpreted as another planting feature. The backfilled feature was sealed by a 0.20m thick layer of modern topsoil [114], similar material being recorded to the east in Trenches 101 and 102 as [100]. On the northern side of the trenches the stratigraphic sequence was completed by the stone paving slabs of the current path through this part of Little Dean's Yard.

3 Discussion and Conclusions

- 3.1 The excavation of the three trenches mostly removed material that had been deposited when the gas pipes had been installed and the service cuts backfilled in the later 20th century, but in common with trenches previously monitored in The Sanctuary, Dean's Yard and particularly Trench 29 towards the western end of Little Dean's Yard, earlier deposits were recorded in the section at the sides of the trenches.
- 3.2 Medieval structural remains had been exposed in Trench 29 but no contemporary *in situ* material was identified in the more recently excavated trenches in College Gardens. However, residual medieval building materials were recovered from the trenches, indicating there had been some activity associated with construction and subsequently demolition during this period.
- 3.3 Probably the earliest *in situ* deposits recorded during the excavation of the three later trenches dated to the late medieval to early post-medieval period, though the essentially two-dimensional observation of most deposits and a lack of recovered artefactual material has meant that the dating of deposits is not entirely secure. The earliest *in situ* materials were difficult to interpret but may have been buried soils or surface deposits, or even the infill of early features.
- 3.4 The early deposits were sealed in all trenches by mortar-rich deposits, which appeared to have been associated with building demolition in the area and possible ground levelling. Again, a lack of artefactual material has meant that this phase cannot be accurately dated but it has been interpreted as a broad 18th-century phase of activity and therefore contemporary with a significant period of activity recorded in the trenches in Dean's Yard to the west.
- 3.5 A later phase of activity appears to have been associated with further demolition and levelling and whilst some deposits may date to the late 18th century it is assumed that much of this activity dates to the late 19th to early 20th centuries. The most recent developments recorded, included a modern planting feature, the laying/development of the current topsoil and the construction of the path along the northern side of the trenches.
- 3.6 Overall, the watching brief, in common with the earlier phases of monitoring, has demonstrated that a sequence of deposits from possibly as early as the late medieval period up to the present day, remains extant within the College Garden area. Unlike the area at the west of Little Dean's Yard however, no extant medieval structural remains are present in the area of the three more recently excavated trenches, though residual finds indicate activity in the vicinity.

4 Acknowledgements

- 4.1 Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited would like to thank Steve Wright of National Grid Gas for initially commissioning the project and Jacques Deneys of tRIIO for instructing the post-excavation report. PCA would also like to thank the staff of Brockwell and Son Ltd., who carried out the excavation of the gas pipe trenches.
- 4.2 We also thank Professor Warwick Rodwell, consultant archaeologist for Westminster Abbey, for his advice and Diane Walls of GLAAS, English Heritage for monitoring the project on behalf of the City of Westminster.
- 4.3 The author would like to thank Kari Bower for monitoring the trench excavations, Chris Mayo for his project management, Jennifer Simonson for the preparation of illustrative material, and Chris Jarrett, Kevin Hayward and Kevin Rielly for identifying and dating the artefactual material.

5 Bibliography

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- Taylor, J. and Brown, G. 2009 *PCA Fieldwork induction manual, (Operations Manual I)*, London: Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd.

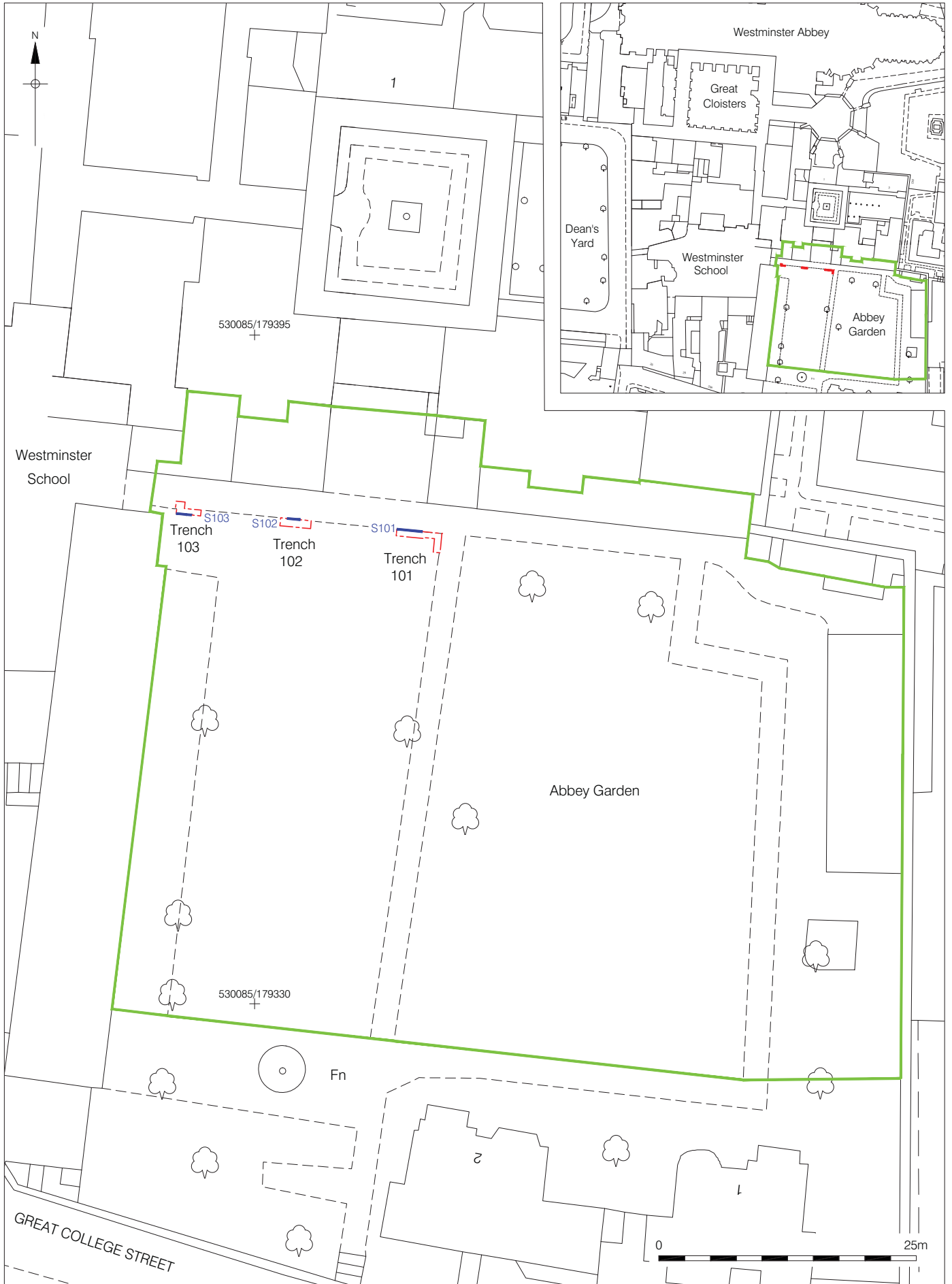


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Figure 1
 Site Location
 1:20,000 at A4

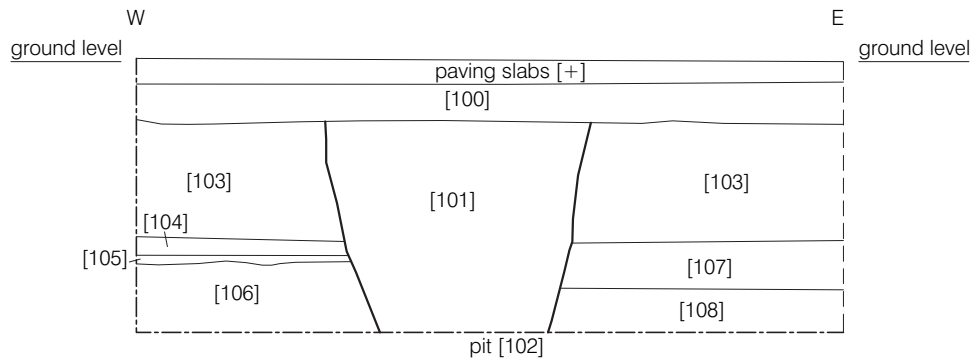


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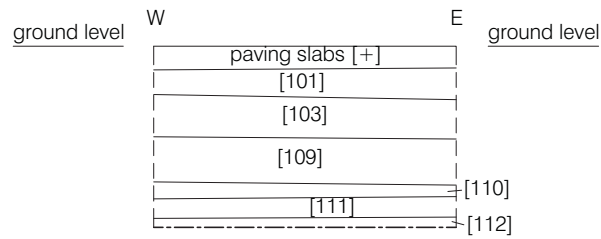
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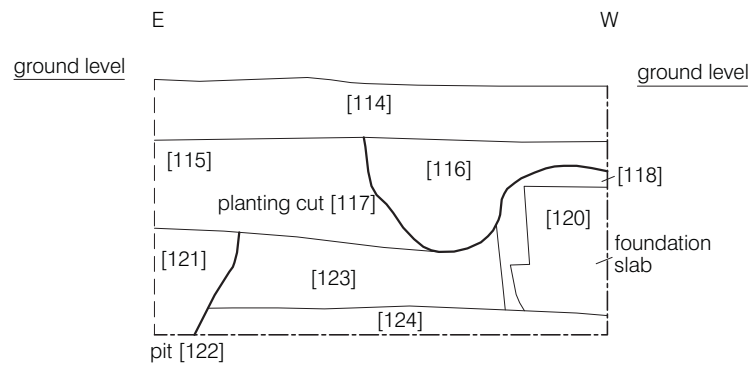
Figure 2
Trench Location
1:2,500 and 1:500 at A4



Section 101
Trench 100
South Facing



Section 102
Trench 102
South Facing



Section 103
Trench 102
North Facing



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Figure 3
Sections 101 - 103
1:25 at A4

APPENDIX 1: PLATES



Plate 1: Location of Trench 100, Looking North-West



Plate 2: Trench 100, Looking West



Plate 3: Trench 100 (foreground) and Trench 101 (middle distance), Looking West



Plate 4: Trench 101, Looking West



Plate 5: Location of Trench 102, Looking West

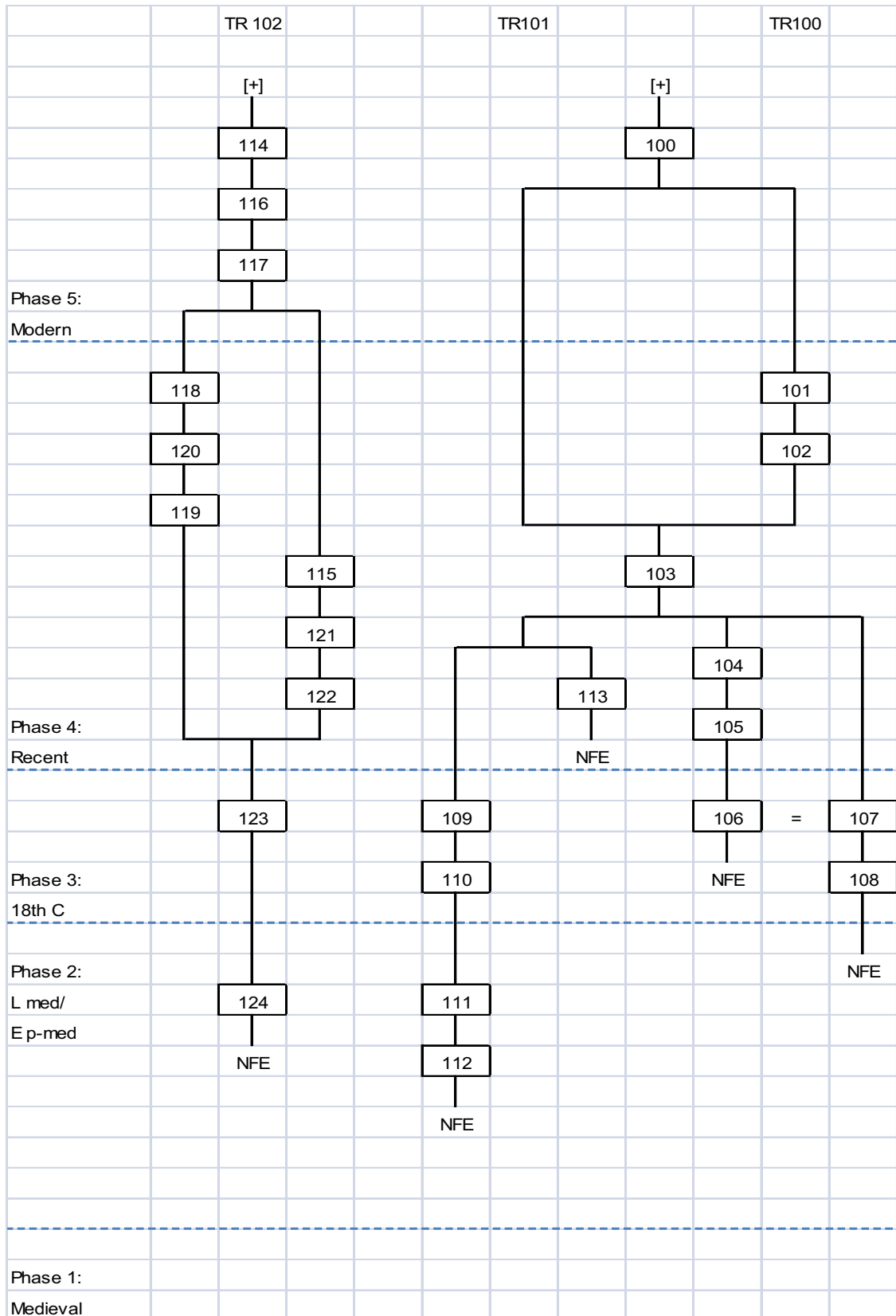


Plate 6: Trench 102, Looking West

APPENDIX 2: CONTEXT INDEX

Site Code	Context	Type	Trench	Description	Date	Phase
SYQ10	100	Layer	100, 101	Topsoil	Modern	5
SYQ10	101	Fill	100	Fill of pit [102]	C19-20	4
SYQ10	102	Cut	100	Small pit	C19-20	4
SYQ10	103	Layer	100, 101	Subsoil	C19-20	4
SYQ10	104	Layer	100	Sandy levelling deposit	C19-20	4
SYQ10	105	Layer	100	Silt layer	C19-20	4
SYQ10	106	Layer	100	Levelling deposit/mortar layer	18 th century	3
SYQ10	107	Layer	100	Levelling deposit/mortar layer	18 th century	3
SYQ10	108	Layer	100	Silty clay layer	18 th century	3
SYQ10	109	Layer	101	Levelling deposit/mortar layer	18 th century	3
SYQ10	110	Layer	101	Levelling deposit/mortar layer	18 th century	3
SYQ10	111	Layer	101	Levelling deposit/mortar layer	L med/E post-med	2
SYQ10	112	Layer	101	Levelling deposit/mortar layer	L med/E post-med	2
SYQ10	113	Masonry	101	Possible brick drain	C19-20	4
SYQ10	114	Layer	102	Topsoil	Modern	5
SYQ10	115	Layer	102	Subsoil	C19-20	4
SYQ10	116	Fill	102	Fill of cut [117]	Modern	5
SYQ10	117	Cut	102	Possible planting cut	Modern	5
SYQ10	118	Fill	102	Fill of construction cut [119]	C19-20	4
SYQ10	119	Cut	102	Construction cut for slab [120]	C19-20	4
SYQ10	120	Masonry	102	Foundation slab	C19-20	4
SYQ10	121	Fill	102	Fill of pit [122]	C19-20	4
SYQ10	122	Cut	102	Small pit	C19-20	4
SYQ10	123	Layer	102	Levelling deposit	18 th century	3
SYQ10	124	Layer	102	Possible occupation layer/upper pit fill	L med/E post-med	2

APPENDIX 3: SITE MATRIX



APPENDIX 4: OASIS FORM

OASIS ID: preconst1-182230

Project details

Project name	An Archaeological Watching Brief at College Gardens, Westminster Abbey
Short description of the project	The work was a continuation of a programme to replace old cast iron pipes with modern plastic ones, carried out to the west in Dean's Yard and The Sanctuary and reported upon previously. This phase of the watching brief monitored the excavation of three trenches along the south side of a footpath within College Gardens, east of Little Dean's Yard and to the north-east of Westminster School. Probably the earliest in situ deposits recorded dated to the late medieval to early post-medieval period. The earliest in situ materials were difficult to interpret but may have been buried soils or surface deposits, or even the infill of early features. These were sealed in all trenches by mortar-rich deposits, which appeared to have been associated with building demolition in the area and possible ground levelling, probably in the 18th-century and therefore contemporary with a significant period of activity recorded in the trenches in Dean's Yard to the west. A later phase of activity appears to have been associated with further demolition and levelling and whilst some deposits may date to the late 18th century it is assumed that much of this activity dates to the late 19th to early 20th centuries. The most recent developments recorded, included a modern planting feature, the laying/development of the current topsoil and the construction of the path along the northern side of the trenches.
Project dates	Start: 18-10-2012 End: 20-10-2012
Previous/future work	Yes / No
Any associated project reference codes	SYQ10 - Sitecode
Any associated project reference codes	preconst1-98145 - OASIS form ID
Type of project	Recording project
Site status	World Heritage Site
Current Land use	Other 12 - Verge
Current Land use	Other 11 - Thoroughfare
Monument type	LAYER Medieval
Monument type	LAYER Post Medieval
Monument type	WALL Post Medieval
Monument type	PIT Post Medieval
Monument type	LAYER Modern
Significant Finds	TILE Medieval
Significant Finds	POTTERY Post Medieval
Investigation type	""Watching Brief""
Prompt	National Planning Policy Framework - NPPF

Project location

Country	England
Site location	GREATER LONDON CITY OF WESTMINSTER CITY OF WESTMINSTER Little Dean's Yard
Postcode	SW1P 3PJ
Study area	10.00 Square metres
Site coordinates	TQ 30092 79377 51.4978448169 -0.125652011043 51 29 52 N 000 07 32 W Point
Lat/Long Datum	Unknown

Project creators

Name of Organisation	Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited
Project brief originator	Local Authority Archaeologist and/or Planning Authority/advisory body

Project design originator	Chris Mayo
Project director/manager	Chris Mayo
Project supervisor	Kari Bower
Type of sponsor/funding body	Utility Company
Name of sponsor/funding body	National Grid Gas

Project archives

Physical Archive recipient	Westminster Abbey Museum
Physical Archive ID	SYQ10
Physical Contents	"Animal Bones", "Ceramics", "Worked stone/lithics"
Digital Archive recipient	Westminster Abbey Museum
Digital Archive ID	SYQ10
Digital Contents	"Stratigraphic"
Digital Media available	"Images raster / digital photography"
Paper Archive recipient	Westminster Abbey Museum
Paper Archive ID	SYQ10
Paper Contents	"Stratigraphic"
Paper Media available	"Context sheet", "Plan", "Section"

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