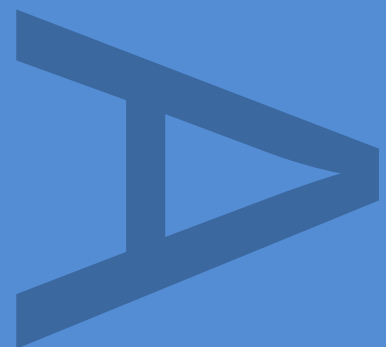


**ST JOHN THE  
EVANGELIST'S  
CHURCHYARD,  
HOLLOWAY ROAD,  
LONDON BOROUGH OF  
ISLINGTON:  
AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL  
WATCHING BRIEF**

**SITE CODE: UHB13**

**PCA REPORT NO. R11854**

**SEPTEMBER 2014**



**PRE-CONSTRUCT ARCHAEOLOGY**

**ST JOHN THE EVANGELIST'S CHURCHYARD, HOLLOWAY ROAD,  
LONDON BOROUGH OF ISLINGTON  
AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF**

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**Site Code:** UHB13

**Central OS NGR:** TQ 29719 86647

**Local Planning Authority:** London Borough of Islington

**Commissioning Client:** Ramboll UK Limited on behalf of TfL (Transport for London)

**Written/Researched by:** Joe Brooks

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**September 2014**

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PCA Report No: R11854

DOCUMENT VERIFICATION

ST JOHN THE EVANGELIST'S CHURCHYARD,  
HOLLOWAY ROAD,  
LONDON BOROUGH OF ISLINGTON

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

Quality Control

Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited		
	Project Number	K3280
	Report Number	R11854

	Name & Title	Signature	Date
Text Prepared by:	Joe Brooks		16/09/14
Graphics Prepared by:	Jennifer Simonson		16/09/14
Graphics Checked by:	Josephine Brown	J. Brown	16/09/14
Project Manager Sign-off:	Charlotte Matthews	Charlotte Matthews	16/09/14

Revision No.	Date	Checked	Approved

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Figure 1: Site location

Figure 2: Test Pit Location

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## **1 ABSTRACT**

- 1.1 This report details the working methods and results of an archaeological investigation that was undertaken during the excavation of a test pit within St John the Evangelist's Churchyard, Holloway Road, London Borough of Islington. The test pit was excavated by groundworks contractors in order to understand the foundations of the churchyard wall, which is situated on the south side of Holloway Road. The works were undertaken in connection with, and in advance of, replacement of the A1 Upper Holloway Bridge, which lies to the north-east of St John the Evangelist's Church. The work was commissioned by Phil Emery of Ramboll UK Limited on behalf of Transport for London.
- 1.2 The aim of the project was to understand the construction of the foundations of the churchyard wall and to identify and record any buried archaeological deposits within the test pit.
- 1.3 The churchyard lies within St John's Grove Conservation Area. The Church of St John the Evangelist is listed Grade II\* and is described in its listing citation as follows: 'St John's Church with St Peter's and churchyard wall and gates (Formerly Listed as: St John's Grove Church of St John) Anglican church. 1826-28 by Sir Charles Barry. White Suffolk brick laid in Flemish bond with stone dressings; roof obscured by parapet... Walls of white brick with stone coping to north, west and south sides of the churchyard; two pairs of iron gates to Holloway Road; gates to St John's Grove of later date'. The churchyard lies immediately to the east of an Archaeological Priority Area which relates to the medieval hamlet at Upper Holloway.
- 1.4 The excavation of the test pit established that London Clay lies at about 0.8m BGL. The construction trench for the 19<sup>th</sup>-century churchyard boundary wall was cut into this natural clay. The bricks and mortar from this wall suggest that it was built at a similar time to St John's Church in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. A small brick drain was built onto the natural clay and ran parallel with the boundary wall at a distance of approximately 0.7m. The stratigraphic evidence suggests that the drain was constructed at the same time as the boundary wall.
- 1.5 After the construction of the wall and drain several layers of made ground, containing fragments of building material derived from the construction of St John the Evangelist's Church, were deposited raising the ground level of the churchyard by approximately 0.8m to the current ground level.
- 1.6 No human remains were discovered during the excavation and no archaeological artefacts or deposits dating to before the 19<sup>th</sup> century were encountered.

## **2 INTRODUCTION**

- 2.1 Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited undertook an archaeological watching brief during the excavation of a test pit within St John the Evangelist's Churchyard in the London Borough of Islington (**Figures 1 and 2**). The test pit was excavated by groundworks contractors in order to understand the foundations of the churchyard wall, which is situated on the south side of Holloway Road. The works were undertaken in connection with, and in advance of, replacement of the A1 Upper Holloway Bridge, which lies to the north-east of St John the Evangelist's Church. The archaeological work was commissioned by Phil Emery of Ramboll UK Limited on behalf of Transport for London.
- 2.2 The aim of the project was to understand the construction of the foundations of the churchyard wall and to identify and record any buried archaeological deposits within the test pit.
- 2.3 The churchyard lies within St John's Grove Conservation Area. St John's Church is listed Grade II\* and is described in its listing citation as follows: 'St John's Church with St Peter's and churchyard wall and gates (Formerly Listed as: St John's Grove Church of St John) Anglican church. 1826-28 by Sir Charles Barry. White Suffolk brick laid in Flemish bond with stone dressings; roof obscured by parapet... Walls of white brick with stone coping to north, west and south sides of the churchyard; two pairs of iron gates to Holloway Road; gates to St John's Grove of later date'. The churchyard lies immediately to the east of an Archaeological Priority Area which relates to the medieval hamlet at Upper Holloway.
- 2.4 The site was assigned the unique code UHB13. Following completion and approval, the entire site archive will be deposited at the London Archaeological Archive and Research Centre (LAARC).

### **3 PLANNING BACKGROUND**

#### **3.1 National Guidance: National Planning Policy Framework**

- 3.1.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was adopted on March 27 2012. The NPPF constitutes guidance for local planning authorities and decision-takers both in drawing up plans and as a material consideration in determining applications.
- 3.1.2 In considering any planning application for development the local planning authority will be guided by the policy framework set by the NPPF, by current Local Plan policy and by other material considerations.

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

- 3.2.1 The proposed development will be subject to the considerations of policy 7.8 from The London Plan (2011).

## **4 GEOLOGICAL AND TOPOGRAPHIC BACKGROUND**

- 4.1 The British Geological Survey (Sheet 256, 1:50,000 Series) indicates that St John the Evangelist's Churchyard overlies London Clay (BGS 2014). Holloway Road (A1) to the north of the churchyard lies at a height of 45.21m aOD (above Ordnance Datum). The road climbs gradually to the west and drops gradually to the east.



## 5 METHODOLOGY

- 5.1 The test pit was located against the south side of the north boundary wall around St John the Evangelist's Churchyard (**Figure 2**). The rectangular test pit measured 0.55m east–west by 1.2m north-south and was 1.5m deep. It was excavated by the groundwork contractors using hand tools (**Plate 1**). The test pit was excavated to investigate the depth of the boundary wall and its footings. The watching brief took place on 13<sup>th</sup> August 2014. The test pit was excavated until the base of the foundation of the wall was reached.
- 5.2 All recording systems employed were fully compatible with those used elsewhere in London; that is those developed out of the Department of Urban Archaeology Site Manual, presented in PCAs Operations Manual 1 (Taylor 2009).
- 5.3 The test pit was located on site by Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited using sketch plans and hand measurements to local landmarks. A plan and section were drawn at a scale of 1:20 (**Figure 3**).
- 5.4 A detailed description of all the archaeological strata that was exposed was recorded on *pro-forma* recording sheets.
- 5.5 Excavated spoil was inspected for finds and indications of archaeologically significant deposits.

## **6 RESULTS**

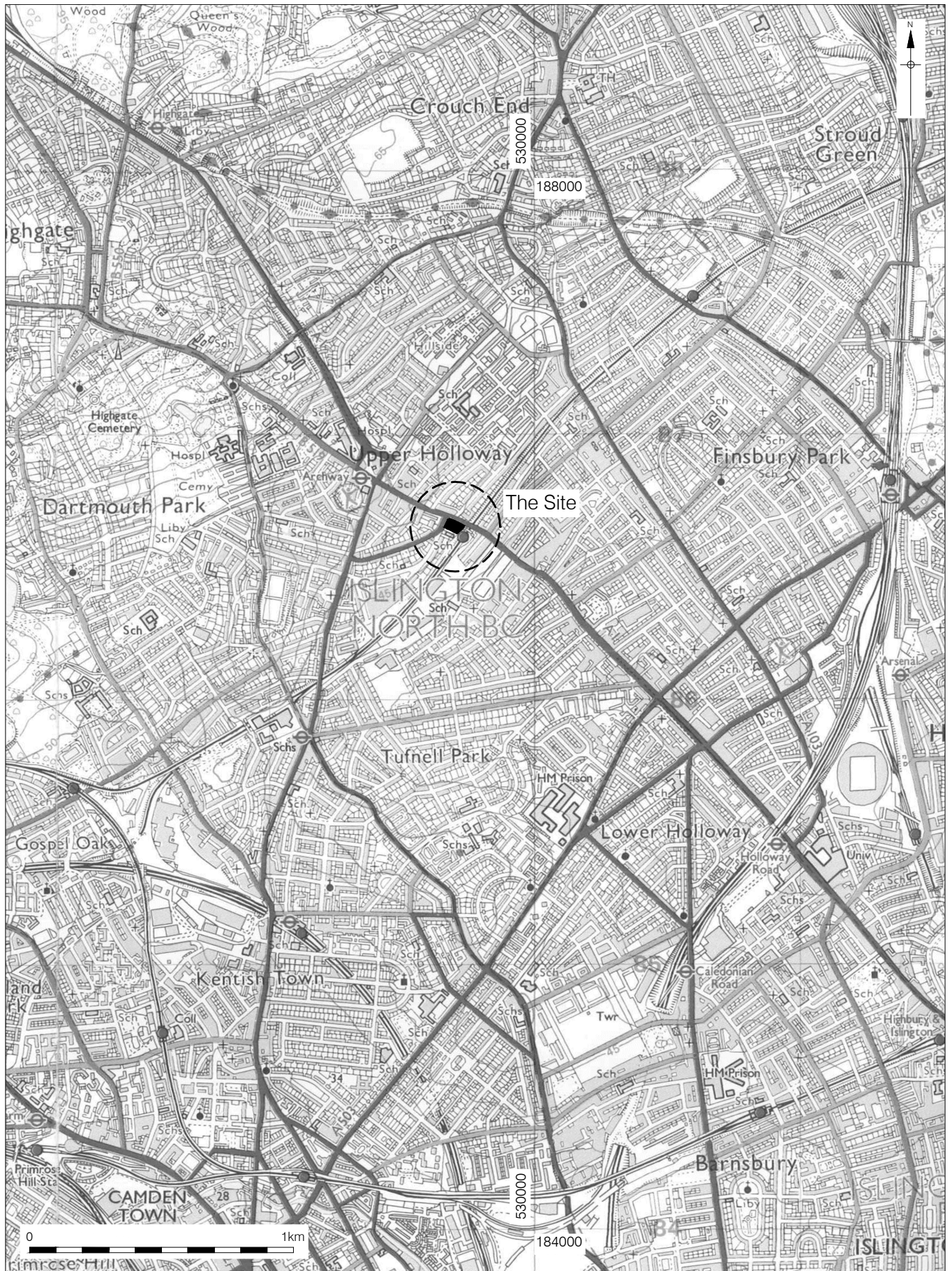
- 6.1 The earliest deposit encountered within the test pit was [5] natural yellowish brown, sandy silty clay at 0.8m below ground level (BGL) (**Figure 3**).
- 6.2 A construction trench [4] for the boundary wall, running east-west with a vertical edge, was discovered at a depth of 0.8m BGL and cut the natural clay layer [5] to a depth of 1.5m BGL.
- 6.3 The 19<sup>th</sup>-century boundary wall [7] was erected in this construction cut with frogged reddish brown bricks in Flemish bond and hard, yellowish grey mortar. The wall, which was topped with limestone capping slabs, continued vertically to a depth of 0.9m BGL where the brick wall foundation stepped out to a width of 0.2m. This footing then continued down to the bottom of the wall at a depth of 1.5m BGL. The wall was approximately 3m in total height from the base of the footing to the top of the limestone capping stones.
- 6.4 The construction cut was backfilled with [3] light brown, sandy silt containing very frequent small fragments of limestone. This deposit was observed at 0.8m BGL and continued down to a depth of 1.5m BGL.
- 6.5 In the southern part of the test pit a low and narrow 19<sup>th</sup>-century drain [6] (**Plate 2**) was built on top of the natural clay. It was constructed with brownish red frogged bricks and bonded with hard sandy, yellowish grey mortar. The bricks were capped by limestone slabs measuring 0.36m long by 0.21m wide by 0.04m thick. The top of the limestone slabs were found at 0.7m BGL.
- 6.6 Sealing the contexts described above was a layer of light brown, clayey silt [2] found at a depth of 0.6m BGL, which contained inclusions of frequent limestone and CBM (ceramic building material) flecks. This ground make-up deposit is associated with the construction of St John the Evangelist's Church in the 1820s.
- 6.7 Another layer [1] of made ground, encountered at 0.4m BGL, sealing [2] consisted of light greyish brown, sandy silt with frequent fragments of slate, CBM and limestone. This layer is attributed to the building up of the churchyard ground level during the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries.
- 6.8 A thick layer of loose, dark brown "garden-soil" containing frequent fragments and occasional large blocks of limestone was observed to a depth of 0.4m BGL. This layer constitutes the modern topsoil.

## **7 CONCLUSION**

- 7.1 The excavation of the test pit established that London Clay lies at about 0.8m BGL. The construction trench for the 19<sup>th</sup>-century churchyard boundary wall was cut into this natural clay. The bricks and mortar from this wall suggest that it was built at a similar time to St John the Evangelist's Church in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. A small brick drain was built onto the natural clay and ran parallel with the boundary wall at a distance of approximately 0.7m. The stratigraphic evidence suggests that the drain was constructed at the same time as the boundary wall.
- 7.2 After the construction of the wall and drain, several layers of made ground, containing fragments of building material derived from the construction of St John's Church, were deposited raising the ground level of the churchyard by approximately 0.8m to the current ground level.
- 7.3 No human remains were discovered during the excavation and no archaeological artefacts or deposits dating to before the 19<sup>th</sup> century were encountered.

## **8 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

- 8.1 Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited would like to thank Phil Emery of Ramboll UK Limited for commissioning the project on behalf of Transport for London.
- 8.2 The project was managed for Pre-Construct Archaeology by Charlotte Matthews. Joe Brooks carried out the on-site watching brief work and wrote this report. Jennifer Simonson prepared the illustrations.

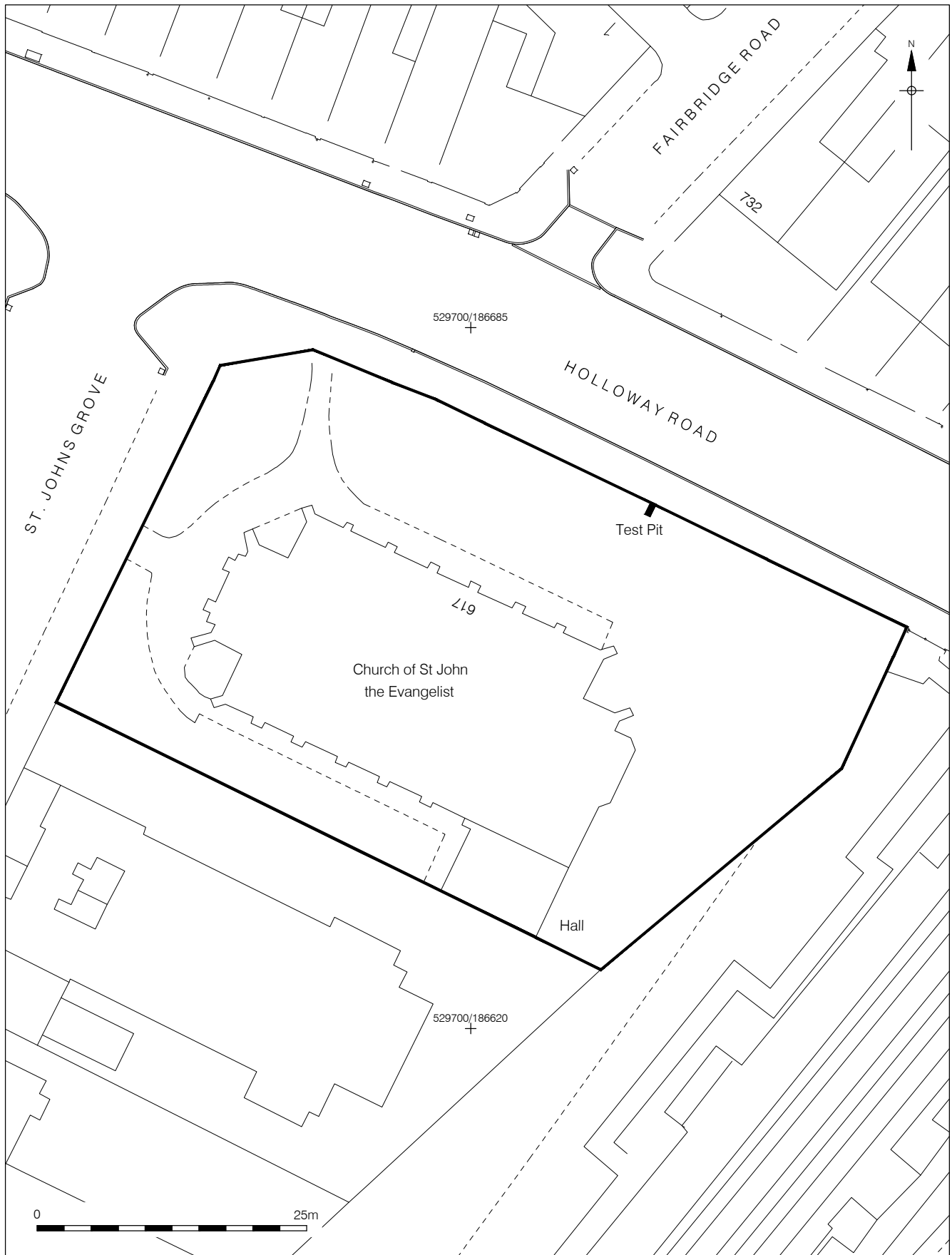


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19/08/14 JS

Figure 1  
Site Location  
1:20,000 at A4



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 Topographical survey supplied by Ramboll  
 © Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd 2014  
 19/08/14 JS

Figure 2  
 Test Pit Location  
 1:500 at A4

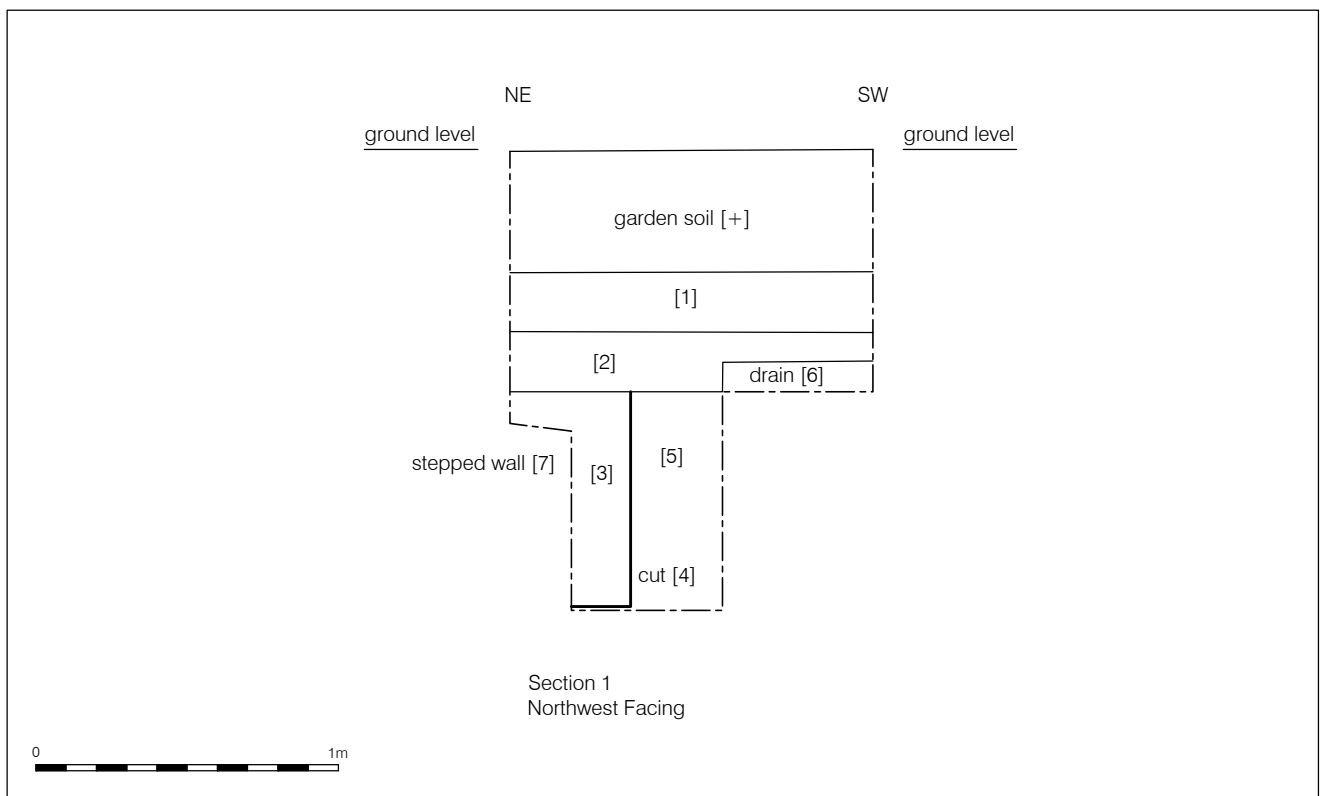


Figure 3  
Plan and Section  
1:25 at A4





Plate 1 – Excavation of the test pit, looking east



Plate 2 – Test pit with boundary wall to left (north) and drain to the right (south), looking east.



## APPENDIX 1: OASIS FORM

OASIS ID: preconst1-190183

### Project details

Project name	St John the Evangelist's Churchyard Archaeological Watching Brief
Short description of the project	<p>Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited undertook an archaeological watching brief during the excavation of a test pit within St John the Evangelist's Churchyard in the London Borough of Islington. The test pit was excavated by groundworks contractors in order to understand the foundations of the churchyard wall, which is situated on the south side of Holloway Road. The work was commissioned by Ramboll UK Limited on behalf of Transport for London and was undertaken in connection with, and in advance of, replacement of the A1 Upper Holloway Bridge, which lies to the north-east of St John the Evangelist's Church. The Church was designed by Sir Charles Barry and built 1826-28. Both the church and the churchyard walls are listed Grade II* and lie within St John's Grove Conservation Area. The churchyard lies immediately to the east of an Archaeological Priority Area which relates to the medieval hamlet at Upper Holloway. The excavation of the test pit established that London Clay lies at about 0.8m BGL. The construction trench for the 19<sup>th</sup>-century churchyard boundary wall was cut into this natural clay. The bricks and mortar from this wall suggest that it was built at a similar time to St John's Church in the early 19th century. A brick drain constructed at the same time as the churchyard wall was found in the test pit and ran parallel with it at a distance of approximately 0.7m. No human remains or archaeological artefacts were found.</p>
Project dates	Start: 13-08-2014 End: 13-08-2014
Previous/future work	Yes / Not known
Any associated project reference codes	UHB13 - Sitecode
Type of project	Recording project
Site status	Listed Building
Current Land use	Other 4 - Churchyard
Monument type	WALL Post Medieval
Significant Finds	NONE None

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Investigation type	"Field observation","Recorded Observation","Test-Pit Survey"
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Prompt	Conservation Area Consent
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#### Project location

Country	England
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Site location	GREATER LONDON ISLINGTON HOLLOWAY St John the Evangelist's Churchyard
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Postcode	N19 3JD
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Study area	0.66 Square metres
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Site coordinates	TQ 29719 86647 51.5632709374 -0.128344685614 51 33 47 N 000 07 42 W Point
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#### Project creators

Name of Organisation	Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited
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Project brief originator	Phil Emery, Ramboll
--------------------------	---------------------

Project design originator	Charlotte Matthews
---------------------------	--------------------

Project director/manager	Charlotte Matthews
--------------------------	--------------------

Project supervisor	Joe Brooks
--------------------	------------

Type of sponsor/funding body	Transport Company
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Name of sponsor/funding body	Transport for London
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#### Project archives

Physical Archive Exists?	No
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Digital Archive recipient	LAARC
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Digital Archive ID	UHB13
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Digital Media available	"Images raster / digital photography","Text"
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Paper Archive recipient	LAARC
-------------------------	-------

Paper Archive ID	UHB13
------------------	-------

Paper Media available	"Context sheet","Drawing"
-----------------------	---------------------------

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### Project bibliography 1

Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	St John the Evangelist's Churchyard, London Borough of Islington: An Archaeological Watching Brief
Author(s)/Editor(s)	Brooks, J.
Other bibliographic details	R11854
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Description	A4 report
Entered by	Charlotte Matthews (cmatthews@pre-construct.com)
Entered on	16 September 2014

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