

**LAND AT ALDGATE PLACE, LONDON
E1 7PH**

**ASSESSMENT OF AN
ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING
BRIEF**

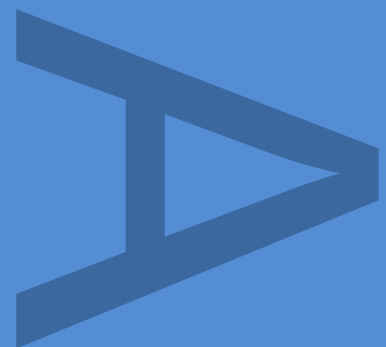
**LOCAL PLANNING AUTHORITY: LONDON
BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS**

**PLANNING APPLICATION NUMBER:
PA/13/00218**

PCA REPORT NO: 11927

SITE CODE: ALD11

DECEMBER 2014



PRE-CONSTRUCT ARCHAEOLOGY



DOCUMENT VERIFICATION

LAND AT ALDGATE PLACE, LONDON E1 7PH

ASSESSMENT OF AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

Quality Control

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Project Number	K3682
Report Number	R11927

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Local Planning Authority:	London Borough of Tower Hamlets
Planning Application Number:	PA/13/00218
Central NGR:	TQ 3995 8131
Commissioning Client:	CgMs Consulting
On Behalf Of	Barratt East London
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Document ID:	PCA Report Number R11927
Document Status	Issued for approval

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1 ABSTRACT

- 1.1 This report details the working methods and results of an archaeological watching brief undertaken by Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited on land at Buckle Street, Colchester Street, Commercial Road, Leman Street and Whitechapel Road (collectively known as Aldgate Place), London E1 7PH in the London Borough of Tower Hamlets (Figure 1). The watching brief was conducted at various times in October and November 2014 and was commissioned CgMs Consulting on behalf of Barratt East London.
- 1.2 A detailed Archaeological Impact Assessment was previously prepared for the site (Hawkins and Gailey 2012) which concluded that any archaeological features once present upon the site were likely to have been removed by the modern buildings which were recently demolished.
- 1.3 The proposed development of the site as permitted by planning consent is for the *“demolition of existing buildings and creation of a mixed use development, comprising three towers of 22, 25 and 26 storeys and a series of lower buildings ranging from 6 to 9 storeys.”* Of the three towers the northern most has a single storey basement, whilst the southernmost has a double storey basement. The archaeological fieldwork herein reported consisted of a watching brief during ground reduction on the second storey basement level (Figure 2), where it was considered that previous development may not have totally truncated the archaeological horizons. The watching brief was undertaken in accordance with an approved Written Scheme of Investigation for the project prepared by the client’s archaeological consultant Suzanne Gailey of CgMs Consulting (Gailey 2013).
- 1.4 The watching brief revealed a sequence of natural sands and gravels sealed by a layer of post-medieval made ground which was itself overlain by modern made ground. This sequence was observed across the entire area monitored.
- 1.5 No archaeological features or deposits were observed during the watching brief.

2 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 This report details the results and working methods of an archaeological watching brief undertaken by Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited at Aldgate Place, London, E1 7PH in the London Borough of Tower Hamlets.
- 2.2 The subject site comprises land at Buckle Street, Colchester Street, Commercial Road, Leman Street and Whitechapel High Street, London, E1 7PH that have now been amalgamated to be known collectively as Aldgate Place. The site is centred at TQ 33957 81318.
- 2.3 A detailed Archaeological Impact Assessment was previously undertaken by CgMs Consulting (Hawkins & Gailey 2012) on behalf of Barratt East London which had contained within a summary of findings from geotechnical test-pits monitored by PCA in 2011. Discussions between CgMs Consulting and the Archaeology Advisor to the London Borough of Tower Hamlets led to the design of a mitigation scheme wherein the development groundworks necessary for the construction of the second storey basement would be subject to an archaeological watching brief. A Written Scheme of Investigation (Gailey 2013) was prepared which detailed the scope and methodology for the watching brief, and was approved by the Archaeology Advisor to the LPA.
- 2.4 The work was commissioned by CgMs Consulting on behalf of Barratt East London, The watching brief was supervised by James Langthorne, Richard Humphrey and the author and was project managed by Chris Mayo, all of Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited. The work was monitored by Adam Single of the Greater London Archaeological Advisory Service (GLAAS), the Archaeology Advisor to the London Borough of Tower Hamlets.
- 2.5 The watching brief revealed a sequence of modern and post medieval made ground that sealed the natural sands and gravels with no archaeological features or deposits being noted.
- 2.6 Site records were compiled using the unique site code ALD11.

3 PLANNING BACKGROUND

3.1 General

- 3.1.1 The planning background of the site along with all relevant planning policies have been discussed in detail in the Archaeological Impact Assessment (Hawkins & Gailey 2012). Therefore only the site specific planning background is discussed below.

3.2 Site Specific

- 3.2.1 Planning permission for the proposed residential redevelopment of the site has been granted by the London Borough of Tower Hamlets under application number PA/13/00218. From the schedule of planning conditions, Condition 5 specified that:

No demolition or development shall take place until the applicant has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation which has been submitted to and approved by the local planning authority.

No development or demolition shall take place other than in accordance with the Written Scheme of Investigation so approved.

The development shall not be occupied until the site investigation and post investigation assessment has been completed in accordance with the programme set out in the Written Scheme of Investigation so approved, and the provision made for analysis, publication and dissemination of the results and archive deposition has been secured.

- 3.2.2 Discussions between CgMs Consulting and the Archaeology Advisor to the London Borough of Tower Hamlets led to the design of a mitigation scheme wherein the development groundworks necessary for the construction of the second storey basement would be subject to an archaeological watching brief. A Written Scheme of Investigation (Gailey 2013) was prepared which detailed the scope and methodology for the watching brief, and was approved by the Archaeology Advisor to the LPA.
- 3.2.3 There are no Scheduled Ancient Monuments on or particularly near the study site. The site lies within an 'Area of Archaeological Importance' defined by the Borough's Core Strategy Map.

4 GEOLOGICAL AND TOPOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

- 4.1 The site's full geological and topographical background has been covered in the Archaeological Impact Assessment (Hawkins and Gailey 2012) and is summarised here.
- 4.2 The site is underlain by Taplow Terrace Gravels, overlain by Langley Silt commonly referred to as Brickearth. In the immediate area of the site the top of the gravels has been recorded at between c.8.80 and 11.05m AOD and the top of the Langley silt at between c.10.20m - 12.20m AOD.
- 4.3 In the immediate vicinity of the site has been recorded widespread evidence for brickearth quarrying which has severely truncated the archaeological resource.
- 4.4 A geotechnical investigation at the site in 2011, during which test-pits were monitored by PCA, revealed modern truncation to a depth of 3.5m.
- 4.5 The existing topography of the site between 13.8m AOD on the north and 14.4m AOD on the south is entirely a product of modern development.

5 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

- 5.1 The site's full archaeological and historical background has been covered in the Archaeological Impact Assessment (Hawkins and Gailey 2012) and is summarised here.
- 5.2 In the immediate vicinity of the site has been recorded widespread evidence for brickearth quarrying which has severely truncated the archaeological resource.
- 5.3 The impact assessment suggests that by the time of the Agas map of 1570 the Whitechapel High Street frontage of the site was entirely developed with agricultural and horticultural land behind. The situation is the same on Morgan's map of 1682. Rocque's map of 1762 shows that the site was by now almost fully developed, and the impact assessment suggests that in advance of this comprehensive development the site would have been subject to brickearth quarrying (Hawkins and Gailey 2012, 9).
- 5.4 Map regression shows that the site remained intensively developed throughout the subsequent years, until the Second World War when intensive bombing destroyed the southern half of the site and severely damaged the northern half. As a result the site was been subsequently redeveloped post-war, with those developments now demolished to implement the new consented scheme.

6 METHODOLOGY

- 6.1 The Written Scheme of Investigation noted that the “site is covered in Made Ground from depths of between 3.90m below ground level to 6m below ground level. The proposed single basement in the north of the site will be excavated to a depth of 3.7m below ground level and as such will sit within the made ground. The proposed double basement will be excavated to a depth of 7m below ground level and as such has the potential to impact the disturbed gravels that lie beneath the made ground” (Gailey 2013, 4). Therefore the watching brief was intended to monitor only the excavations for the deeper second storey basement.
- 6.2 The principle objective of the watching brief was to record any archaeological artefacts and ecofacts and their context and, if possible, ascertain the date of the earliest human activity in this area and the subsequent sequence of occupation.
- 6.3 All aspects of the work followed national (IfA 2013) and local (GLAAS 2009) guidelines, and complied with PCA's own fieldwork manual (Taylor and Brown 2009). The fieldwork was carried out in accordance with methodologies stipulated within the approved WSI.
- 6.4 Excavation proceeded with the use of mechanical diggers and was carried out in controlled spits until archaeological strata were discovered or the formation level was reached.
- 6.5 Following the ground reduction, where required, relevant faces of the excavation were inspected and cleaned using hand tools.
- 6.6 All significant archaeological features were investigated by hand tools and recorded in plan at 1:20 or in section at 1:10 using standard single context recording methods. Photographs were taken where appropriate.
- 6.7 Plans, sections and the location of the interventions monitored were located by use of engineering site drawings and foundation location plans, which referenced piling lines established on site. Heights in this report are calculated from engineering levels calculated to OS datums and located on the site.
- 6.8 Site records were compiled continuing the unique site code ALD11 which was originally obtained for the 2011 geotechnical watching brief at the site. Context numbers were started at 100 in order to avoid confusion of records.
- 6.9 Upon completion of the works all archival material will be deposited with the London Archaeology Archive and Research Centre (LAARC) under unique site code ALD11.

7 ARCHAEOLOGICAL PHASE DISCUSSION

7.1 Phase 1: Natural Deposits

- 7.1.1 The earliest deposits encountered during the watching brief were natural sands and gravels [102] that were seen at approximately 4.0m below ground level, approximately 10.4m OD. This comprised of mid-yellow sand with very frequent inclusions of small round and sub angular pebbles. At the deepest part of the excavation these gravels were visible continuing below 6m below ground level.

7.2 Phase 2: Post Medieval Made Ground

- 7.2.1 Sealing the natural gravels [102] across the northern part of the area monitored was a truncated and localised layer of post-medieval soil [101]. This comprised of moderately compact, mid greyish brown sandy silt with occasional inclusions of cbm, mortar and shell fragments. This was seen at a depth of approximately 3m below ground level, approximately 11.4m OD, with an approximate thickness of 1.0m. This layer is considered to be made ground, in which no modern material was found. It is therefore considered that this potentially represents a small area of undisturbed ground perhaps relating to the agricultural and horticultural activity implied from the 17th and 18th century maps.

7.3 Phase 3: Modern Made Ground

- 7.3.1 Layer [101] was sealed across the entire study area by a layer of relatively modern made ground [100]. This comprised of mid brown sandy silt with inclusions of concrete, brick, tile and occasionally plastic. It was seen from ground level at approximately 14.4m OD for a thickness of approximately 3.5m to 4.0m.



Plate 1: View of initial basement reduction showing modern ground atop natural gravels



Plate 2: View of lower basement reduction showing localised possible agricultural or horticultural soil atop natural gravels



Plate 3: View of lower basement reduction showing modern ground atop natural gravels

8 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

- 8.1 The watching brief monitored ground reduction on the southernmost part of the site where a double basement is due to be constructed.
- 8.2 A sequence of natural sands and gravels was overlain in a small location at the north of the watching brief area by post-medieval made ground, considered to represent the localised use of the site for agricultural and horticultural activity. This soil horizon and elsewhere the natural gravels were sealed by a thick layer of modern made ground.
- 8.3 No archaeological features were observed.
- 8.4 Upon approval of this report and with confirmation that the condition is discharged the completed archive will be deposited with the London Archaeological Archive and Research Centre under the unique site code ALD11.

9 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- 9.1 Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd would like to thank Suzanne Gailey of CgMs Consulting for commissioning the work on behalf of Barratt East London.
- 9.2 Thanks are also extended to Adam Single of the Greater London Archaeology Advisory Service for monitoring the work on behalf of the London Borough of Tower Hamlets.
- 9.3 The author would like to thank Chris Mayo for his project management and editing, and Jennifer Simonson for the illustrations.

10 BIBLIOGRAPHY

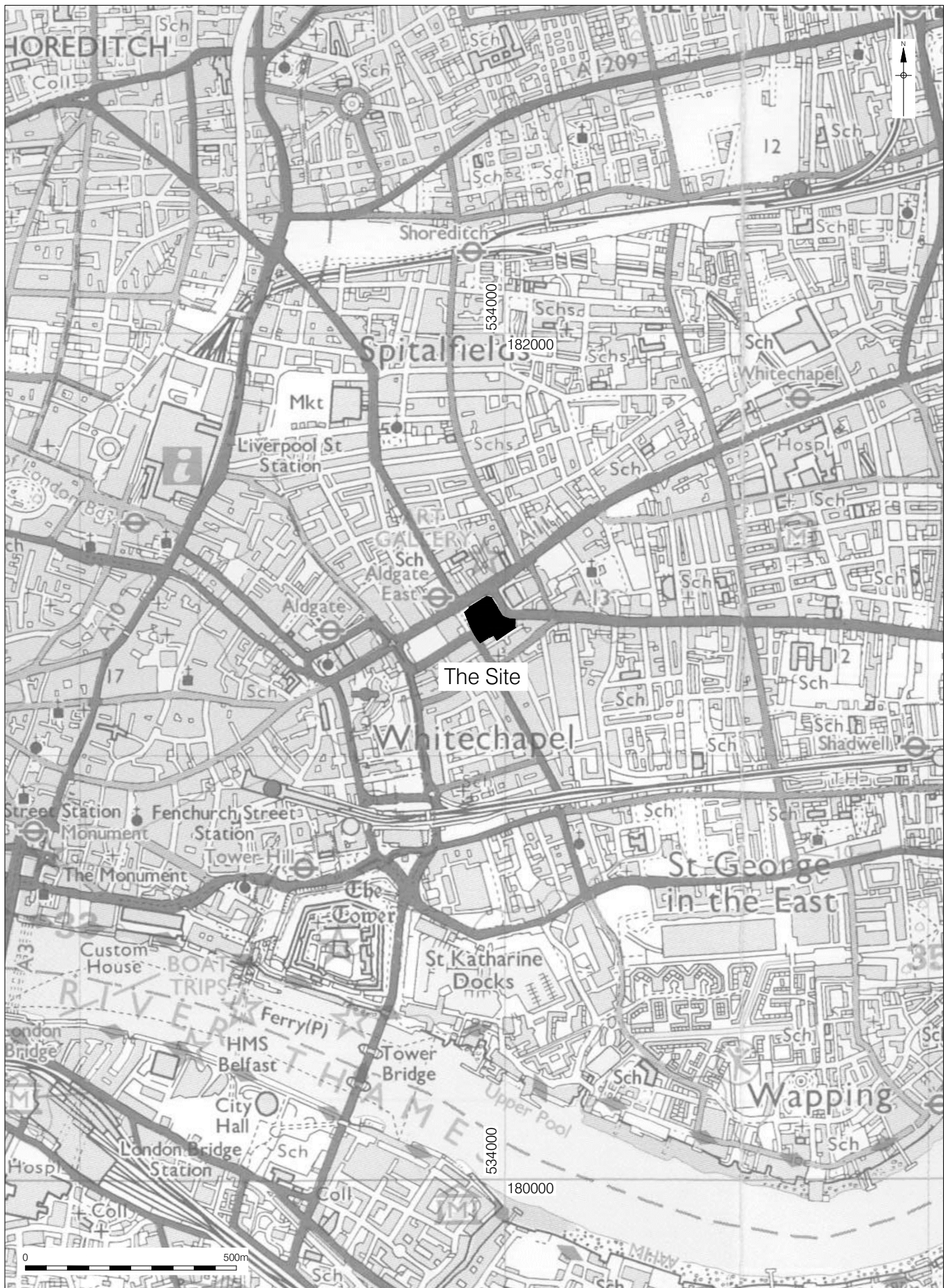
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Gailey, S. 2013 'Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Monitoring Exercise: Land at Aldgate Place, London, E1 7PH', CgMs Consulting, unpublished report

Greater London Archaeological Advisory Service (GLAAS) 2014 Archaeological Guidance Papers 3: Standards and Practices in Archaeological Fieldwork in London, English Heritage.

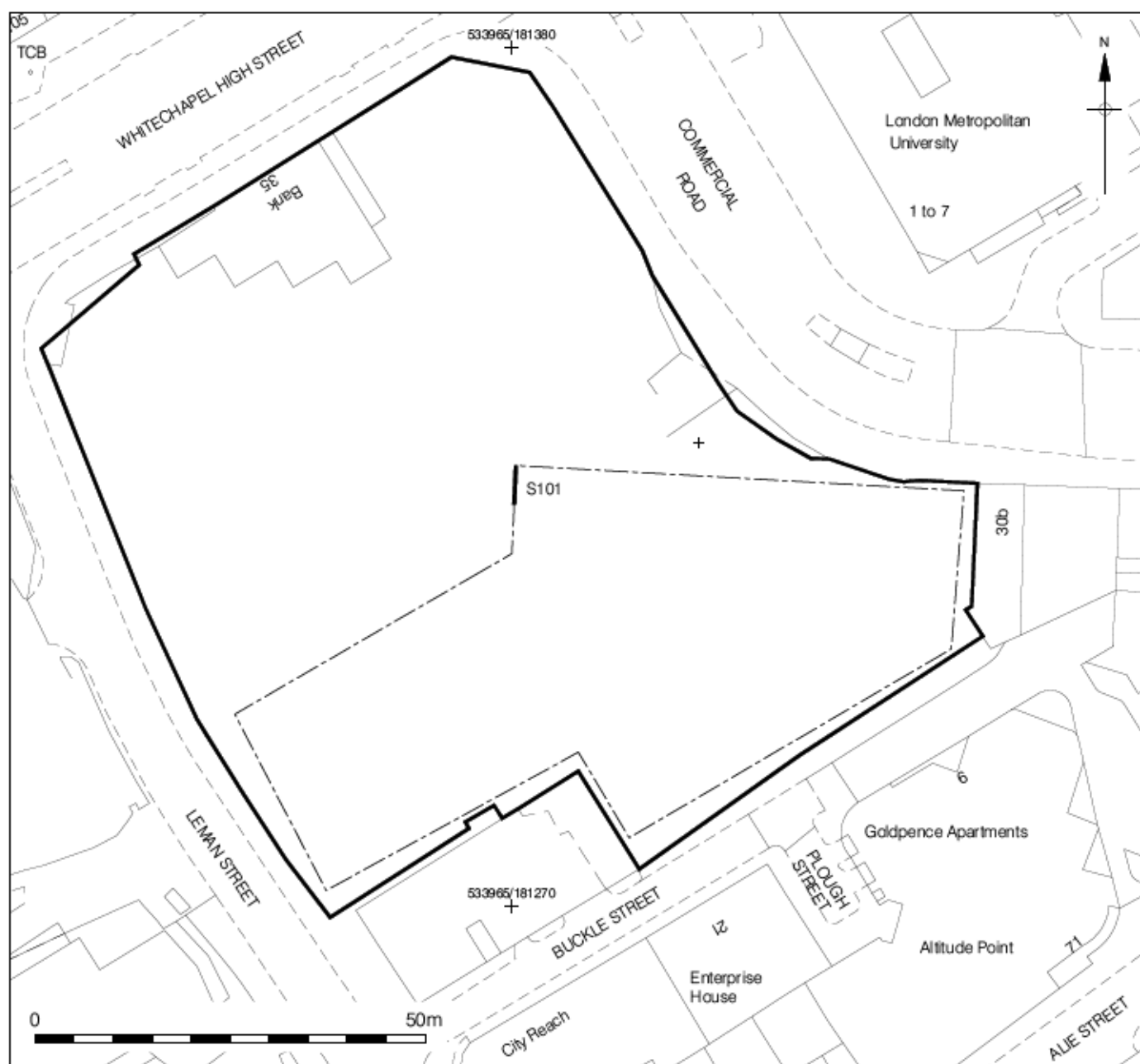
Institute for Archaeologists 2013 Standard and Guidance for an Archaeological Watching Brief, Institute for Archaeologists

Taylor, J. and Brown, G. 2009 PCA Fieldwork induction manual, (Operations Manual 1), London: Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd.



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Figure 1
 Site Location
 1:12,500 at A4



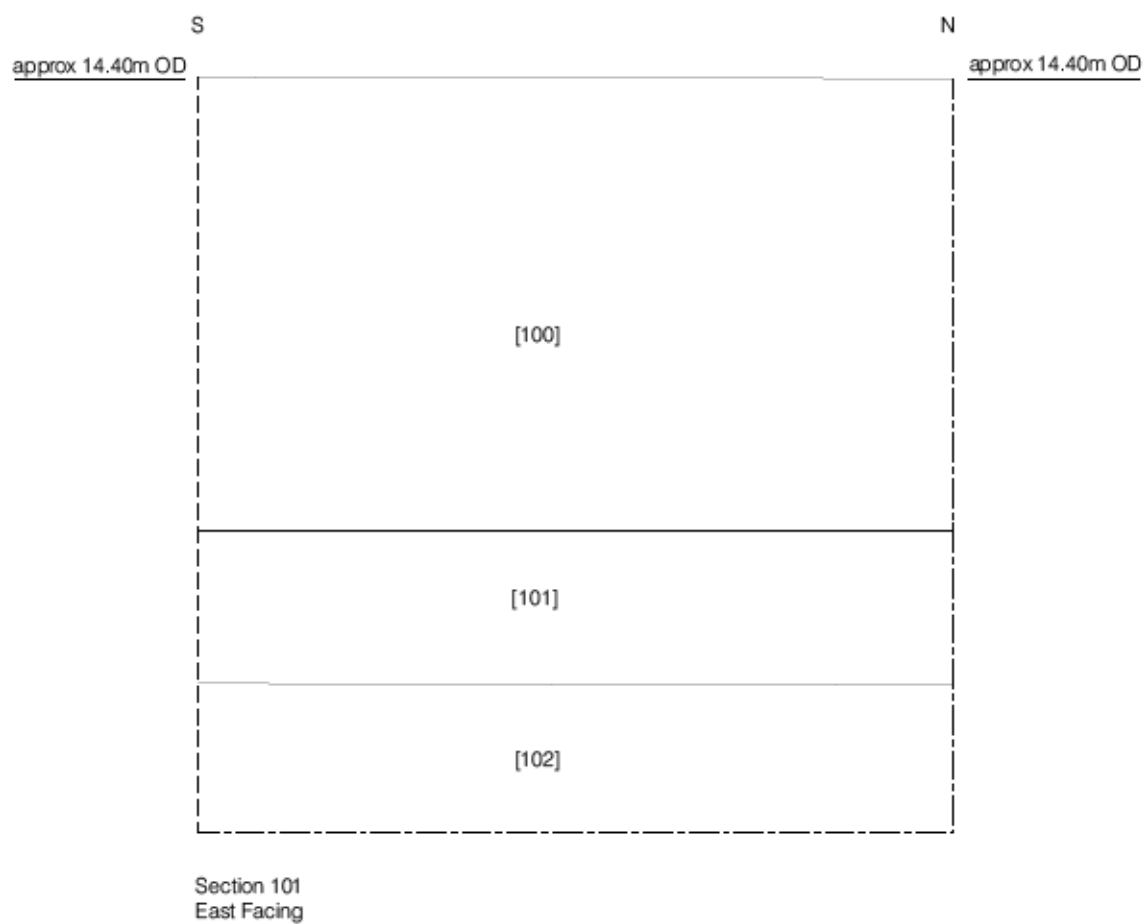
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Figure 2
Trench Location
1:800 at A4



0 2m

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Figure 3
Section 101
1:50 at A4

APPENDIX 1: SITE MATRIX

		+		
		100	Phase 3	
			Modern	
		101	Phase 2	
			Post Med	
		102	Phase 1	
			Natural	
		NFE		

APPENDIX 2: CONTEXT INDEX

Context No	Type	Section No	Comments
100	Layer	S. 1	Modern Made Ground
101	Layer	S. 1	Post Med Made Ground/Agricultural Horizon
102	Layer	S. 1	Natural Sands and Gravels

APPENDIX 3: OASIS FORM

OASIS ID: preconst1-196998

Project details

Project name	Land at Aldgate Place, London E1 7PH: an Archaeological Watching Brief
Short description of the project	A watching brief was conducted on the southernmost part of the site monitoring ground reduction in advance of construction of a double basement. As per the WSI only the deeper area of basement was monitored. The watching brief revealed a sequence of natural sands and gravels sealed by a layer of post-medieval made ground which was itself overlain by modern made ground. This sequence was observed across the entire area monitored. No archaeological features or deposits were observed during the watching brief.
Project dates	Start: 11-08-2014 End: 13-11-2014
Previous/future work	Yes / No
Any associated project reference codes	ALD11 - Sitecode
Any associated project reference codes	PA/13/00218 - Planning Application No.
Type of project	Recording project
Site status	Local Authority Designated Archaeological Area
Current Land use	Vacant Land 1 - Vacant land previously developed
Monument type	NONE None
Significant Finds	NONE None
Investigation type	"Watching Brief"
Prompt	Planning condition

Project location

Country	England
Site location	GREATER LONDON TOWER HAMLETS TOWER HAMLETS Aldgate Place (land at Buckle Street, Colchester Street, Commercial Road, Leman Street and Whitechapel High Street)
Postcode	E1 7PH
Study area	2500.00 Square metres
Site coordinates	TQ 3995 8131 51.5128565763 0.017056679862 51 30 46 N 000 01 01 E Point
Lat/Long Datum	Unknown
Height OD / Depth	Min: 10.40m Max: 10.40m

Project creators

Name of Organisation	Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited
Project brief originator	Local Authority Archaeologist and/or Planning Authority/advisory body
Project design originator	CgMs Consulting
Project director/manager	Chris Mayo
Project supervisor	Ian Cipin
Project supervisor	James Langthorne
Project supervisor	Richard Humphrey

Type of sponsor/funding body Developer
Name of sponsor/funding body Barratt East London

Project archives

Physical Archive Exists? No
Digital Archive recipient LAARC
Digital Archive ID ALD11
Digital Contents "Stratigraphic"
Digital Media available "Images raster / digital photography","Images vector","Spreadsheets","Text"
Paper Archive recipient LAARC
Paper Archive ID ALD11
Paper Contents "Stratigraphic"
Paper Media available "Context sheet","Matrices","Photograph","Plan","Report","Section"

Project bibliography 1

Publication type Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title Land at Aldgate Place, London, E1 7PH: Assessment of an Archaeological Watching Brief
Author(s)/Editor(s) Cipin, I
Other bibliographic details PCA R11927
Date 2014
Issuer or publisher Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd
Place of issue or publication London
Description A4 document with blue covers
Entered by Chris Mayo (cmayo@pre-construct.com)
Entered on 8 December 2014

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