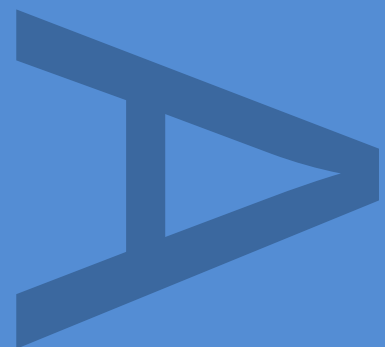


**ST PANCRAS OLD CHURCH,
PANCRAS ROAD, LONDON
BOROUGH OF CAMDEN
NW1 1UL: AN
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
WATCHING BRIEF**

PCA REPORT NO. R12237

OCTOBER 2015



PRE-CONSTRUCT ARCHAEOLOGY

**ST PANCRAS OLD CHURCH, PANCRAS ROAD, LONDON BOROUGH OF CAMDEN,
NW1 1UL: AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF**

Museum of London Site Code: POC15

Local Planning Authority: London Borough of Camden

Central NGR: TQ 2976 8347 (529768, 183474)

Commissioning Client: T Loughman & Co Ltd

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October 2015

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DOCUMENT VERIFICATION

ST PANCRAS OLD CHURCH,
PANCRAS ROAD,
LONDON BOROUGH OF CAMDEN
NW1 1UL

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

Quality Control

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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 during drainage works on land at St Pancras Old Church, London Borough of Camden.
- 1.2 The fieldwork was carried out from 3rd to 9th September 2015 and consisted of an archaeological watching brief during the excavation of a new drainage trench through the churchyard. The work was commissioned by T Loughman & Co Ltd, the drainage contractors.
- 1.3 The watching brief encountered made ground as a result of landscaping activity in the churchyard, which comprised the demolition material from terraced houses previously on the site and demolished in the late 19th century. At the south end of the trench re-deposited clay and disturbed human remains were encountered to a depth of 1.5m below ground level.
- 1.4 Natural geological deposits were not observed during the excavation works.
- 1.5 The section of the drainage works nearest the church was not monitored.

2 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited (PCA) during drainage works at St Pancreas Old Church, London Borough of Camden (**Figures 1 and 2**).
- 2.2 The site is located within the London Borough of Camden and is centred on Ordnance Survey National Grid Reference TQ 2976 8347 (529768, 183474).
- 2.3 A new drainage trench was observed in the western part of the churchyard to the north of St Pancras Old Church.
- 2.4 The project was undertaken in accordance with an approved Written Scheme of Investigation (Mayo 2015).
- 2.5 Following the completion of the project the site archive will be deposited in its entirety with the London Archaeological Archive and Research Centre (LAARC) identified by the unique code POC15.
- 2.6 The watching brief was conducted between 3rd and 9th September 2015.
- 2.7 The project was managed for PCA by Charlotte Matthews. The watching brief was supervised by the author, Amelia Fairman and Matt Edmonds.

3 PLANNING BACKGROUND

3.1 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

- 3.1.1 In March 2012 the Department for Communities and Local Government issued the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), 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 the NPPF, by current Unitary Development Plan policy and by other material considerations.

3.2 Regional Guidance: The London Plan

- 3.2.1 The over-arching strategies and policies for the whole of the Greater London area are contained within the Greater London Authority's London Plan (July 2011) which includes the following statement relating to archaeology.

Policy 7.8: Heritage assets and archaeology

Strategic

A London's heritage assets and historic environment, including listed buildings, registered historic parks and gardens and other natural and historic landscapes, conservation areas, World Heritage Sites, registered battlefields, scheduled monuments, archaeological remains and memorials should be identified, so that the desirability of sustaining and enhancing their significance and of utilising their positive role in place shaping can be taken into account.

B Development should incorporate measures that identify, record, interpret, protect and, where appropriate, present the site's archaeology.

Planning decisions

C Development should identify, value, conserve, restore, re-use and incorporate heritage assets, where appropriate.

D Development affecting heritage assets and their settings should conserve their significance, by being sympathetic to their form, scale, materials and architectural detail.

E New development should make provision for the protection of archaeological resources, landscapes and significant memorials. The physical assets should, where possible, be made available to the public on-site. Where the archaeological asset or memorial cannot be preserved or managed on-site, provision must be made for the investigation, understanding, recording, dissemination and archiving of that asset.

LDF preparation

F Boroughs should, in LDF policies, seek to maintain and enhance the contribution of built, landscaped and buried heritage to London's environmental quality, cultural identity and economy as part of managing London's ability 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, protecting, enhancing and improving access to the historic environment and heritage assets and their settings where appropriate, and to archaeological assets, memorials and historic and natural landscape character within their area.

3.3 Local Guidance: London Borough of Camden

3.3.1 The relevant Development Plan framework is provided by the Camden Local Development Framework (LDF) adopted November 2010. The Plan contains the following 'saved' policies which provide a framework for the consideration of development proposals affecting archaeological and heritage features.

Policy B8 – Archaeological sites and monuments

A – Sites and monuments of national archaeological importance

When considering development close to sites and monuments of archaeological importance, including scheduled ancient monuments, the Council will seek the physical preservation of the archaeological features and their settings.

B – Sites and monuments of archaeological importance

The council will only grant consent for development where acceptable measures are undertaken to preserve remains of archaeological importance and their settings. Developer should adopt measures that will allow such remains to be permanently preserved in situ. Where this cannot be achieved, no development shall take place until satisfactory excavation and recording of the remains has been carried out.

3.3.2 In terms of designated heritage assets, as defined above, no Scheduled Ancient monuments, Historic Wreck sites or Historic Battlefields lie within a 1km radius of the site.

4 GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY

- 4.1 According to the British Geological Survey, the bedrock of the site is London Clay. No superficial deposits are recorded above the London Clay (BGS on-line, accessed 24/06/15).
- 4.2 A site survey drawing provided to PCA by Molyneux Kerr Architects (“Site Plan And Gardens As Existing”, No: 0303-1/101, date October 2014) shows spot heights around the site with values ranging between approximately 19.4m OD on the western side of the site rising to approximately 21.9m OD on the eastern side. This topography is considered to be largely artificial, resulting from centuries of landscaping.

5 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORIC BACKGROUND

5.1.1 The following potted historical background for the site is summarised from the appeal website of St Pancras Old Church (<http://sosstpancras.org/sample-page/>).

'It has long been suggested that the church stands on the site of a Roman shrine, and the discovery of Roman bricks in the walls of the church may lend support to that theory. An altar stone was found during the restoration of 1848, and has been dated to the sixth century on the basis of the shapes of the crosses. So the present building was perhaps here by the sixth or seventh century, but the first recorded mention is in a manuscript dating to 1160-80. The first recorded visitation was in 1251, and considerable re-building was noted in 1331 when it was damaged by floods.

Though difficult to verify, it is believed that it first became a site of Christian worship as early as 313AD, which would make it one of the earliest in the British Isles.

In days gone by, the little hillock on which the church now stands rose gently above the flood valley of the River Fleet, or Holbourne. It overlooked the site of a Roman encampment on the Brill (possibly Bury Hill), which sloped down towards Kings Cross and Euston.

Traces of the camp were visible in the lifetime of the antiquarian, Dr William E. Stukely (1687-1765), and a stone bearing the name of the XXth Legion was found in 1842 near Battlebridge (Kings Cross).

The Reverend Weldon Champneys, vicar 1797-1810, claimed to have seen in Rome documents relating to the foundation of a church here in the fourth century. Again, Maximilian Mission is quoted in Duppa's Travels on the Continent as saying of St John Lateran, the cathedral of Rome, "...this is the head and mother of all Christian churches, if you except that of St Pancras under Highgate, near London."

However, freedom of religion had been restored to the Roman world in 313, and London was represented by Restitutus, its Bishop, at the Council of Arles in 314; so the persistent tradition, here at St Pancras, of an earlier building for Christian worship has a possible foundation.

In 604 King Ethelbert assigned the land to St Paul's Cathedral. A church building may well have been erected around that time as the 7th century altar stone found concealed within the church, appears to bear out.

From the ninth century the area of the old parish is a narrow strip running from Kenwood at Hampstead to a boundary with the parish of St Giles in the Fields, still to be seen marked on the shopfront of Heal's in Tottenham Court Road. The patronage of the living is in the hands of the Dean and Chapter of St Paul's to this day.

In the 17th century, the church's rural location did not allow it to escape the turmoil of the Civil War and it gained the attention of the Parliamentarians.

It is difficult now to imagine St Pancras as a rural community, but in 1650 the church was described as standing "...in the fields remote from any houses in the said parish." More than once the vicar and many of his parishioners were driven to living in Kentish Town and worshipping there in the Chapel of

Ease to escape the “foul’d ways and great waters” caused by the Fleet and its tributaries.

During the Civil War, London and its surroundings were in the hands of the Parliamentarians, whose regime was notoriously unfriendly towards ‘popery’ and all who practised it. When, in the November of 1642, information came to Parliament that “.... The King was advanced to Redding,” they sent to the city to have care, “...and further ordered the deserted Church of Pancras to be disposed of unto lodgings for fifty Troupers.”

Perhaps it was at this time that the church treasures of St Pancras parish were secretly spirited away – by whom is not known. Certain it is that when the crisis was over a unique VI century altar stone was missing, together with certain holy relics (which may or may not have been those connected with King Oswy). Also lost were valuable articles of Elizabethan and Jacobean silverware.

By the mid nineteenth century, a hundred years of the Industrial Revolution had scattered many a country population and turned villages into ghost towns. The Old Church of St Pancras had always been somewhat isolated, and now the City had drawn the parish’s centre of gravity further and further towards itself. In 1822 all parochial rights were transferred to the new parish church in Euston Road, half a mile away to the South. The Old church became a Chapel of Ease and gradually fell into disuse. By 1847 it was derelict and virtually in ruins.

Ebb was followed by flow. The City had emptied the ancient parish; now it moved to engulf it. A tide of industry, and with it a swell of population, marched Northwards. By the 1840s St Pancras and Somers Town were teeming with life and there was talk of doing something about the old parish church. Restoration of the ruined building, Victorian style, was carried out in 1847-48.

Until 1847, a feature of the church had been the 13th century West tower, with its charming cover and weather vane. Tragically, in the course of restoration, the whole of this tower was taken down.

However, excavating in the old foundations, the workmen stumbled across the solution to a two centuries old mystery: the whereabouts of the treasures hidden from Cromwell’s troops. Six feet down under the floor of the tower, they found an exquisite Elizabethan silver chalice and an Elizabethan/Jacobean flagon, both part of the missing collection of church plate. Most gratifyingly of all, they unearthed the VI century altar stone – intact, but unfortunately without any trace of the holy relics associated with it.

Subsequent studies of the stone have led to some interesting hypotheses. It was found to be marked with five consecration crosses of curious shape. These are of a form said to be found in only one other place: on the tomb of Ethne, the mother of St Columba, who died in 597. If this is so, it would seem to date the stone in the late 6th or early 7th century, and to confirm still further the antiquity of the church itself. It also points to a connection with the Celtic Christians via the Kingdom of Northumbria, which extended much further south than is usually realised.

The fact that the stone is of Kentish Rag has led to a good deal of conjecture; but there is no evidence as yet to support the attractive hypothesis that it served as an altar for St Augustine. The first mention of it is found in an inventory of church goods made in 1251 and now kept in the library of St Paul’s Cathedral in London. The stone itself was restored to its rightful place inlaid in the top surface of the

High Altar, where it remains to this day.

'I knew it had the reputation of being the oldest church in the neighbourhood of London.' So noted the architect Gough about his commission and by contemporary accounts his restoration was generally well received. The Times described the western entrance as 'a most beautiful specimen of Norman architecture', and the Illustrated London News praised the details as 'exceedingly characteristic, and skilfully introduced.'

The single most significant documented change to the church was the restoration by A.D. Gough in 1848. One of the main aims of the work was to increase the number of sittings: the figures given vary from 125 to 150 being increased to 700 or 750 and it had to be accomplished in the middle of a churchyard densely packed with burials.

Just to the north was a high brick wall separating the churchyard from St Giles's Burial Ground and there were burials close up to the south side of the church. Even The Ecclesiologist agreed: 'Considering the circumstances of the parish, and the fact of the old church standing in an old churchyard, we do not object to the enlargement, nor to the method which is adopted of so doing.'

So the old west tower (as mentioned previously) had to go. In its place, the nave was extended about 10 metres, but slightly narrower than the original. A staircase on the south side was built to give access to the west gallery, which had been extended down the north and south sides of the nave as far as the chancel wall. A new vestry was constructed on the north side of the chancel. Slightly later, for it was not built at the time of the reopening of the church in July 1848, was constructed a three stage tower on the site of the former south porch, with belfry at the top, organ chamber underneath and, below that, a baptistery.

The Illustrated London News reported, probably paraphrasing the words of the architect, that 'in the recent operations rendered necessary for the enlargement of this ancient structure, its preservation and restoration with the least possible amount of destruction appears to have been constantly in view'. Indeed, 'the chancel and easternmost part of the Church being left in their original form ... only such parts of the walls [were] cut through as were required for the introduction of the windows'.

In the 1880s, the Catholic way of worship was restored and the parish took on another new lease of life. But this only inspired, in 1888, a further wave of refurbishment in the fashion of the period.

By 1925 the wooden floor was in such a bad state that it had to be replaced by solid flooring. This was not entirely the misfortune it seemed: it provided the incumbent, the Reverend J. Carter Rendell, with an opportunity to rid the building of some of the more dubious 'improvements' of the past. He took out the pews and side galleries, transferred the organ to the West gallery, and hacked away an undistinguished cladding of nineteenth century ceiling plaster to expose, for the first time in nearly a hundred years, the beautiful timbers that we enjoy today.

During the Second World War the church was badly damaged. In 1948 it was repaired and restored under the supervision of Martin Travers ARIBA. Both he and the then Vicar, the Reverend J.F.R. Westlake, were careful to see that no further harm was done. In 1978-79 an extensive restoration of the fabric was directed by Quinlan Terry FRIBA. The Victorian extension at the West end

was converted into a parish room, separated from the main body of the church by a handsome wooden and glazed screen designed by the architect in eighteenth century style. The sanctuary was cleared and rearranged in accordance with modern liturgical order, which is in fact a return to the simpler ways of the earlier church.

The gardens surrounding the church are the remains of two graveyards: that of St Pancras, and an extension to the churchyard of St Giles in the Fields.

The graveyard was closed to burials in 1854, having been the parish burial place for many centuries, and the gardens were opened in 1877. The Borough of St Pancras undertook the work of moving headstones and levelling the ground.

During the 1850s and 1860s there was much concern about the state of the churchyard, intensified by the plans of the Midland Railway Company to acquire it in its entirety for a goods station or to cut through to facilitate their route to the new St Pancras Station. Despite the opening of the new parish church in 1822, it continued to be used for burials until 1854. Between 1827 and 1847 there had been 26,676 interments, and the last took place in 1854. A local resident wrote to *The Times* in 1850 complaining that "More than 25 corpses... have been deposited every week for the last 20 years in an already overcrowded space; and at this very time they are burying in it at nearly twice that rate... teeth, bones, fragments of coffin wood are seen lying in large quantities around these pits".

In 1862, Gough reported that the floor needed to be taken up and concreted over "so as to prevent gases of an injurious description from the bodies escaping into the church to the annoyance and prejudice of the congregation". Even allowing for the fact that intramural burials continued for a number of years after the 1848 restoration, it is surprising that this was necessary, for the problem was not new: people had long before complained "of the bad air in the church, which caused people to leave during the service, affected with headache, dizziness and sickness... the air was thick, heavy and unpleasant to the smell, reminding one of those charnel houses in which are dead men's bones."

During the excavations for the extension and the tower, which went down about 10 feet, the trenches filled "with a dark-coloured, filthy, stinking water" and the clay was 'so saturated with decomposition as to be horribly foetid'. Ordinary labourers had to be replaced by seasoned gravediggers for the work.

In the course of opening up the route into St Pancras Station, the Midland Railway Company removed between 10,000 and 15,000 bodies, not without a little controversy, and the young Thomas Hardy was responsible for overseeing some of the work. Their choice lay "between a churchyard and some gas-works, and it was easy to predict which would be taken", complained *The Builder*. The burial grounds were taken over by the Vestry of St Pancras as a public park in 1871, and enlarged in 1891 with contributions from the Midland Railway'.

6 ARCHAEOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY

6.1.1 In accordance with the approved Written Scheme of Investigation (Mayo, 2015), an archaeological watching/stopping brief was undertaken. This consisted of the machine excavation by the groundworks contractors of the trench to between 1m and 1.60m below ground level [Plate 1]. The machine excavation was monitored by the attendant archaeologist until archaeological deposits or features, the depth of trench required or natural stratigraphy were encountered.



Plate 1: Trench looking south-east

- 6.1.2 The trench and exposed sections were, if necessary, cleaned by hand, recorded and photographed. Recording of the deposits was accomplished using the Single Context Recording Method on *proforma* context and planning sheets, as presented in PCAs Operations Manual 1 (Taylor 2009). Contexts were numbered and are shown in this report within squared brackets. Plans were drawn at a scale of 1:50 and sections at a scale of 1:10.
- 6.1.3 The completed archive, comprising all written, drawn and photographic records, will be deposited with the London Archaeological Archive and Research Centre under the unique Site Code POC15.

7 ARCHAEOLOGICAL SEQUENCE

7.1 Phase 1: Natural Geological Deposit

7.1.1 No natural geological deposits were observed in the trench.

7.2 Post-medieval

7.2.1 In the eastern end of the trench re-deposited clay was noted in the base of the trench [Plate 2]. This was at a height of 19.80m OD and a maximum depth of 0.5m was observed. This contained fragments of human and possibly animal bone as well as CBM and clay pipe fragments. These deposits and bones began showing up as the proximity to the church increased, however the eastern end of the trench by the church was not observed by an archaeologist.



Plate 2: South facing section of eastern end of trench. Redeposited clay [11] with made ground [7] and tarmac above.

7.3 Phase 2: Late Post-medieval

7.3.1 Along the extent of the trench were several deposits of demolition material comprising brick rubble [Plate 1]. These most likely relate to the late 19th century and early 20th century demolition of a row of terraced houses and school that once fronted Pancras Road [Plates 3 and 4]. Particularly concentrated material was observed in section 8 (Figure 3) where a brick wall was observed in section [Plate 5].



Plate 3: Row of terraced houses fronting Pancras Road. The western cemetery gates can be seen on the very right of the photo. The school (below) was to the east of these gates.



Plate 4: School which once fronted Pancras Road. The western and eastern cemetery gates can be seen on the very left and right of the photo, respectively.



Plate 5: Wall [8] in trench section facing south

7.4 Phase 3: Modern

- 7.4.1 Made ground and subsoil in places was observed at a height of 19.19m OD-20.23m OD and was on average 0.6m-1m in depth. This was identified as part of the landscaping works that had taken place in the churchyard. The topsoil and tarmac sealing the trench was recorded from 19.39m OD and extended up to a maximum of 0.55m in thickness.

8 INTERPRETATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

- 8.1.1 Natural geological deposits were not observed due to the trench being located mostly through demolition and landscaping made ground.
- 8.1.2 No archaeological features or artefacts dating to any historical periods from the prehistoric to the early post-medieval were recorded during the archaeological watching brief.
- 8.1.3 Sealing the area of the watching brief were a series of demolition dumped deposits and ground levelling deposits considered to be of 19th and 20th century date and indicative of former demolition of buildings along Pancras Road and cemetery landscaping, respectively.
- 8.1.4 The depositional sequence of the site was completed by topsoil and turf associated with the extant churchyard and represents the modern ground level.

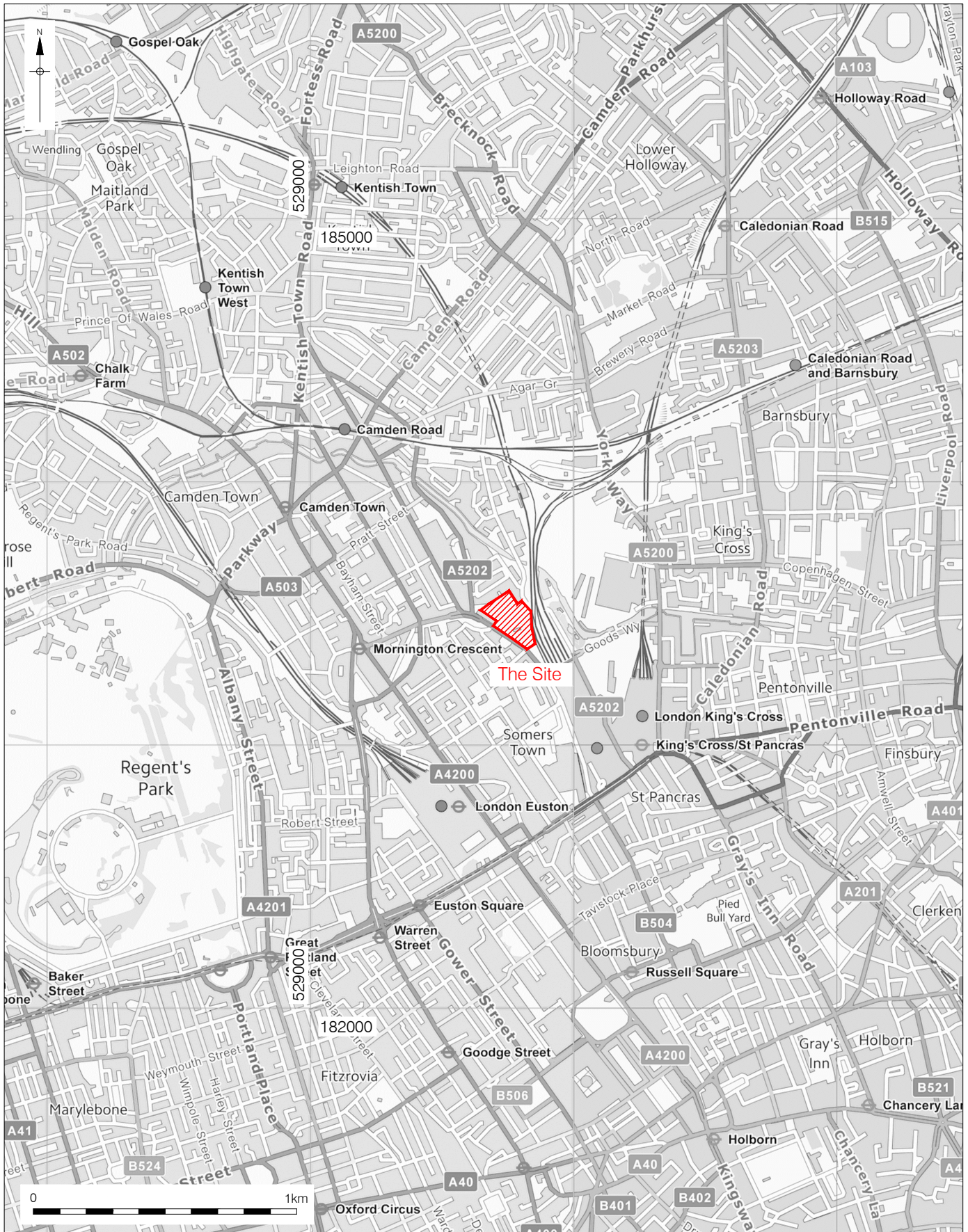
9 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- 9.1.1 Pre-Construct Archaeology would like to thank T Loughman & Co Ltd for commissioning the work.
- 9.1.2 The author would like to thank Charlotte Matthews for project management and editing, and Jennifer Simonson for the illustrations.

10 BIBLIOGRAPHY

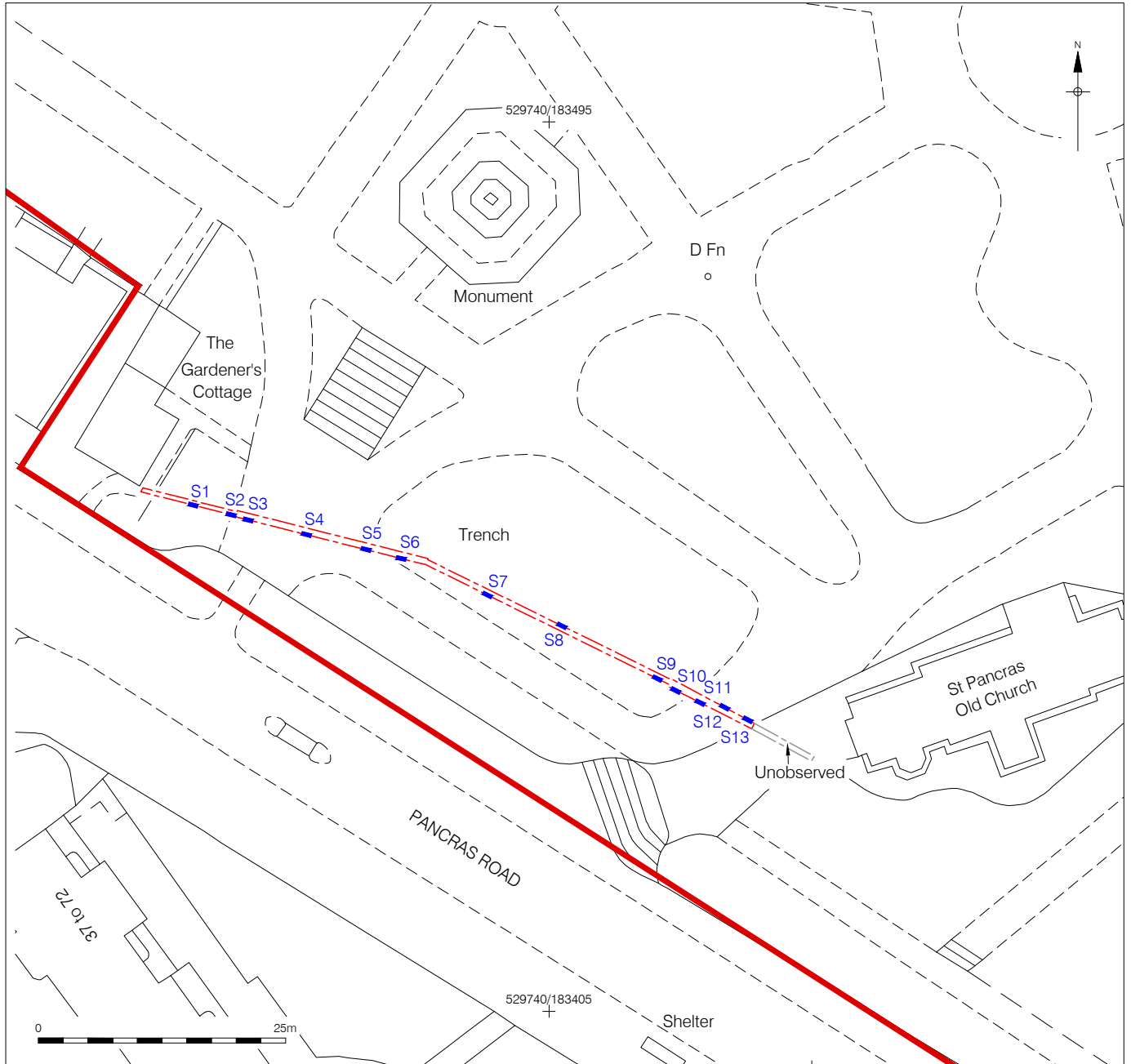
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Taylor, J. with Brown, G. 2009. *Fieldwork Induction Manual: Operations Manual 1*, Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited



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Figure 1
 Site Location
 1:20,000 at A4



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Figure 2
Trench Location
1:625 at A4

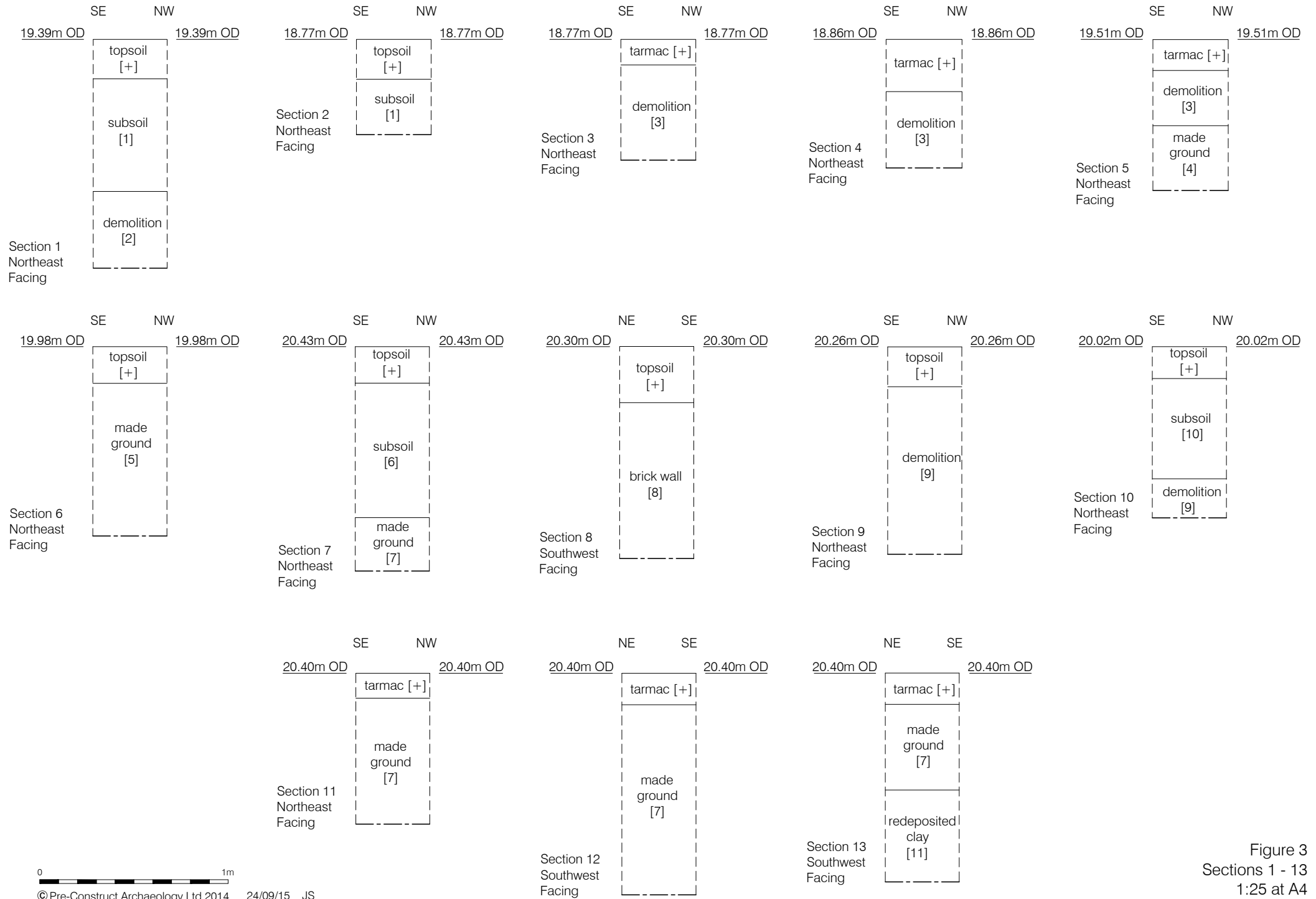


Figure 3
Sections 1 - 13
1:25 at A4

APPENDIX 1: CONTEXT INDEX

Site Code	Context No.	Plan	Section	Type	Description	Date
POC15	1	N/A	1; 2	Layer	Sub-soil	Modern
POC15	2	N/A	1	Layer	Demolition	Post-medieval
POC15	3	N/A	3; 4; 5	Layer	Demolition	Post-medieval
POC15	4	N/A	5	Layer	Made-Ground	Modern
POC15	5	N/A	6	Layer	Made-Ground	Modern
POC15	6	N/A	7	Layer	Sub-soil	Modern
POC15	7	N/A	7; 11; 12; 13	Layer	Made-Ground	Modern
POC15	8	N/A	8	Wall	Brick Wall	Post-medieval
POC15	9	N/A	9; 10	Layer	Demolition	Post-medieval
POC15	10	N/A	10	Layer	Sub-soil	Modern
POC15	11	N/A	13	Layer	Redeposited Brick-earth	Post-medieval

APPENDIX 2: OASIS REPORT FORM

Project ID: preconst1-224825

Project details

Project name	ST PANCRAS OLD CHURCH, CAMDEN NW1 1UL: AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF
Short description of the project	This report details the results and working methods of an archaeological watching brief undertaken by Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited during drainage works on land at St Pancras Old Church, London Borough of Camden. The fieldwork was carried out from 3rd to 9th September 2015 and consisted of an archaeological watching brief during the excavation of a new drainage trench through the churchyard. The watching brief encountered made ground that comprised demolition material from terraced houses previously on the site and demolished in the late 19th century. To the south of the trench re-deposited clay and disturbed human remains were encountered to a depth of 1.5m below ground level. Natural geological deposits were not observed during the excavation works. The section of the drainage trench nearest the church was not monitored.
Project dates	Start: 03-09-2015 End: 09-09-2015
Previous/future work	No / No
Any associated project reference codes	POC15 - Sitecode
Type of project	Recording project
Site status	None
Current Land use	Other 4 - Churchyard
Monument type	TERRACED HOUSE Post Medieval
Significant Finds	HUMAN REMAINS Post Medieval
Investigation type	""Watching Brief""
Prompt	National Planning Policy Framework - NPPF

Project location

Country	England
Site location	GREATER LONDON CAMDEN CAMDEN Land at St Pancras Old Church, Camden, NW1 1UL
Postcode	NW1 1UL
Study area	25 Square metres
Site coordinates	TQ 2976 8347 51.534707831236 -0.12892552362 51 32 04 N 000 07 44 W Point

Project creators

Name of Organisation	Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited
Project brief originator	T Loughman and Co Ltd
Project design originator	Chris Mayo
Project director/manager	Charlotte Matthews

Project supervisor Gemma Stevenson

Project archives

Physical Archive
Exists?

Digital Archive recipient LAARC

Digital Archive ID POC15

Digital Contents "none"

Digital Media available "Images raster / digital photography", "Text"

Paper Archive recipient LAARC

Paper Archive ID POC15

Paper Media available "Context sheet", "Miscellaneous Material", "Photograph", "Plan", "Report", "Section"

Project bibliography 1

Publication type Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
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