

**22-24 BATEMAN'S ROW,
LONDON BOROUGH OF HACKNEY
EC2**

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

AUGUST 2007

BRJ 07

**An Archaeological Evaluation at 22-24 Bateman's Row
Shoreditch, London Borough of Hackney EC2**

SITE CODE: BRJ 07

Central National Grid Reference: TQ 333821

**Written and Researched by Denise Mulligan
Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited, August 2007**

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1 ABSTRACT

- 1.1 This report details the results and working methods of an archaeological evaluation conducted by Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd, on land at 22 - 24 Bateman's Row Shoreditch, in the London Borough of Hackney (Fig. 1).
- 1.2 The evaluation comprised the excavation of a single trench aligned north-south. The trench was located on the ground floor within the existing building and measured 8.00m north-south and 2.00m east-west (Fig 2). The ground floor was constructed of concrete at a highest level of 14.98mOD. Contractors Silver Interiors carried out the work initial excavation and all shoring works.
- 1.3 Natural sandy gravel was encountered at the northern end of the trench, which was overlain by mid grey clay silt; no dating evidence was recovered from this layer. The silt layer was truncated by an east-west cut interpreted as forming part of the northern boundary ditch surrounding the medieval Priory of Saint John the Baptist. The northern boundary wall of the priory is believed to be located on the southern side of Bateman's Row.
- 1.4 Overlying the ditch was a series of layers possibly relating to agricultural use of the land. A robber cut, dated from pottery to the late 17th/18th century was also exposed. This was overlain by a series of 19th century dump layers and intrusions. A 19th century red brick wall aligned north-south with two east-west returning walls and a small brick culvert was also exposed and recorded. A layer of demolition rubble, which in turn was capped with modern concrete, sealed the sequence.
- 1.5 No archaeological features pre-dating the medieval period were encountered during the evaluation.

2 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 An archaeological evaluation was conducted by Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd on land at 22 - 24 Bateman's Row Shoreditch, in the London Borough of Hackney (Fig. 1). The site is situated within the Archaeological Priority Zone centred on Shoreditch and the upper branches of the Walbrook Stream.
- 2.2 The work was conducted between 13th and 22nd August 2007. Theis and Khan Architects commissioned the work in advance of proposed redevelopment of the site. The work was undertaken following a method statement prepared by Tim Bradley of Pre-Construct Archaeology (Bradley 2007), who project managed the site. The author supervised the site and David Divers of English Heritage (GLASS) monitored the site on behalf of the London Borough of Hackney.
- 2.3 The site is occupied by a 20th century two-storey building with a small outdoor courtyard to the east. The site is located on the corner of Bateman's Row and French Place. The work was carried out within the internal ground floor of the existing building. The upper floor of the building remained in use as offices while the works were carried out. A 360 degree mechanical excavator was used to break the concrete and excavate the trench.
- 2.4 The site is centred on the national grid reference TQ333821.
- 2.5 The site was given the site code BJR 07.



Figure 1
Site Location
1:12,500 at A4

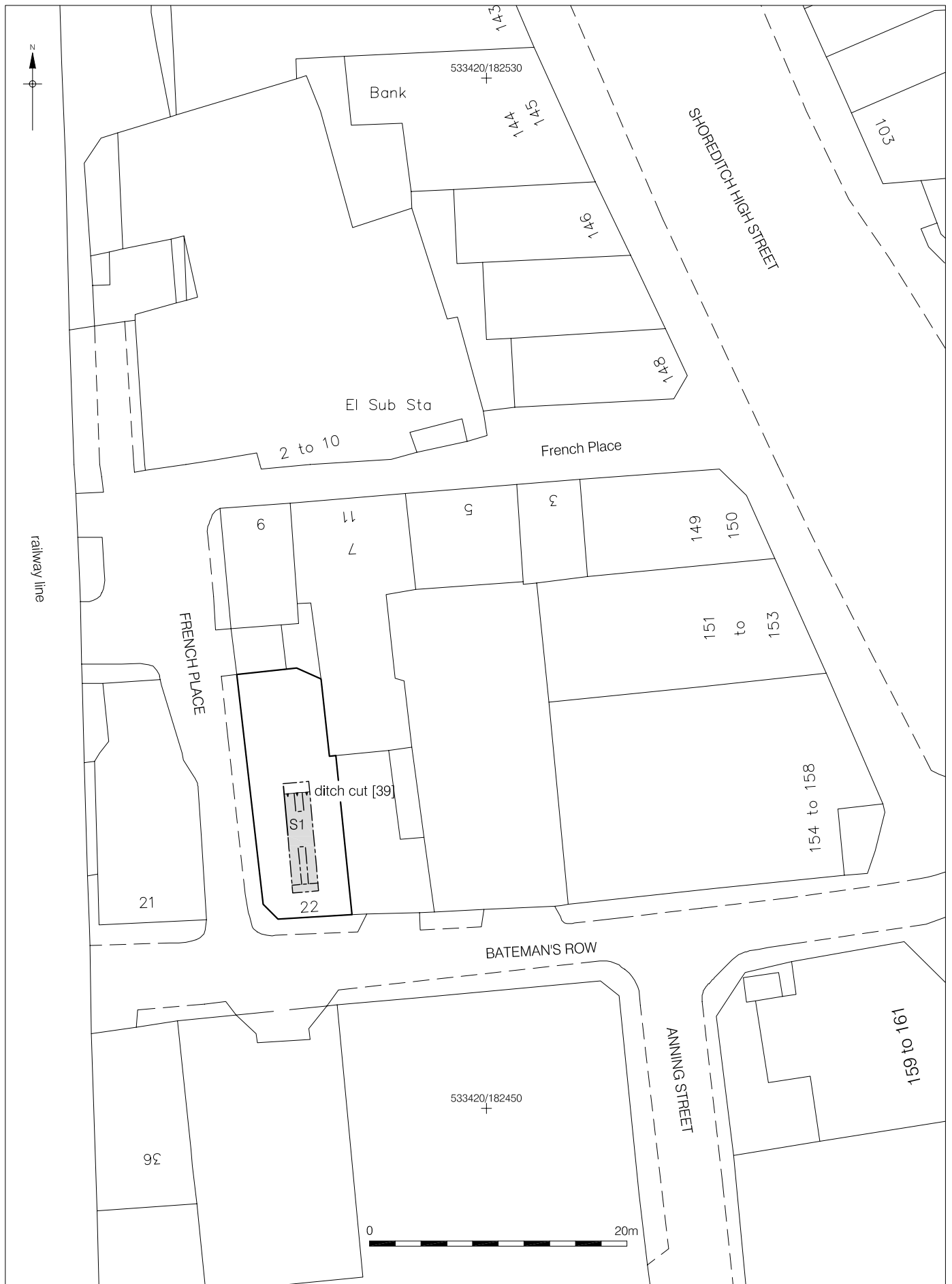


Figure 2
Trench location, showing ditch [39]
1:400 at A4

3 GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY

- 3.1 The under lying geology of the study site is Hackney Gravels overlain by a clay -silt deposit (brickearth). The natural deposits have been eroded over time by a number of tributaries of the Thames; the Walbrook is one of these streams.
- 3.2 A two-storey building and a small car park / courtyard area currently occupy the site. The ground floor and outside car park is covered with a concrete slab which is relatively level at a height of approximately 14.98m OD.

4 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

- 4.1 The site is situated within the Archaeological Priority Zone centred on Shoreditch and the upper branches of the Walbrook stream. Pre-Construct Archaeology prepared an Archaeological Desk-Based assessment for a site at New Inn Yard Shoreditch, south of the study site. (Clough 2003). The following discussion draws heavily from that report.

4.2 Prehistoric

- 4.2.1 The source of the Walbrook stream has long been associated with the area around Holywell Road, directly south of the study site, running down Curtain Road into the city.
- 4.2.2 Very little prehistoric material has been recorded in the vicinity of the study site. A chipped flint tranchet axe (SMR ref: 080011/00/00) was recorded at Great Eastern Street, but overall, evidence for the prehistoric period in the area is lacking.

4.3 Roman

- 4.3.1 The site lies to the west of the supposed route of Ermine Street, the main route heading north out of London. Ermine Street is believed to follow the line of Shoreditch High Street and Kingsland Road.
- 4.3.2 Excavations by the DGLA in 1989 between Holywell lane and New Inn Yard identified Roman activity including 2nd and 4th century, very well preserved Roman pottery and pieces of tegula. This may suggest the presence of a building in the near vicinity of the site.

4.4 Saxon

- 4.4.1 The name Shoreditch is derived from the Saxon *Scoredich* which has been interpreted as “ditch of Sceorf “or ditch leading to the [Thames] shore. No Saxon finds or settlement have ever been identified in this area. A series of clay deposits sealing Roman activity were noted in the 1989 excavation and were presumed to be of this period, although a lack of finds supports this.

4.5 Medieval

- 4.5.1 The earliest reference to *Scoredich* is c. 1148 and properly refers to a drainage ditch leading down to the Thames.
- 4.5.2 The most important site in medieval Shoreditch was the Priory of St John the Baptist or usually known as Holywell Priory (Fig. 4). The priory was founded between 1133 and 1162 by Robert Fitz Generan and became the richest community of Augustinian nuns in England. The original priory site was three acres in size and included the Prioress's pasture, known as the curtain, to the south of Holywell Lane. The main part of the priory was located north of Holywell Lane and south of Bateman's Row. The southern part of the site was excavated by the DGLA in 1989. The excavations (SMR ref: 080141/00/0) revealed at least three phases of building on the site 2.50m below the current ground level. The excavation identified the south isle of the church, a series of small chapels and possibly the south transept. Many of the walls had been robbed-out, but some remained extant to c 1m high, including one wall that contained a possible reliquary niche. Two burials within the interior of the church were identified, as were 15th century decorated floor tiles still in situ. The boundary wall of the priory was located south of the excavation, running near to and parallel with Holywell Lane.

4.6 Post - Medieval

- 4.6.1 In the 16th century, the southern part of the priory site was leased to Thomas, Earl of Rutland, who constructed a mansion here. Some of the mansion was identified in the 1989 excavation. However this mansion is not believed to extend to the north of the priory precinct, where the study site is located.
- 4.6.2 The priory was demolished during the Dissolution but the gatehouse survived and was later demolished c 1800. The 1989 excavations discovered a layer of demolition rubble sealed most of the Priory structures. Finds from this layer included twisted window leads, broken moulded masonry and floor tiles. Two large pits were found, containing organic material and finds dated to the 16th century. These pits were likely to have been dug after the Dissolution.
- 4.6.3 During the Tudor period the population of London increased in size and greater occupation of the suburbs inevitably took place. The area around Shoreditch became inhabited by the poor, and expanded rapidly throughout the 16th and 17th centuries. Shoreditch and Hoxton were notorious for their taverns and theatres in this period.

- 4.6.4 In 1576 a theatre was constructed within the priory site by a local man James Burbage. The theatre was constructed at the junction of Curtain Road and New Inn Yard. The theatre was built of timber and was octagonal in shape. This was demolished and rebuilt on the south bank where it became known as the Globe.
- 4.6.5 A second theatre, The Curtain, was built nearby in 1577 located near to the junction of Curtain Road and Hewlett Street. Shakespeare acted here and it is believed that *Romeo and Juliet* was first performed here. The Curtain fell into disuse by 1625, and was destroyed by the great fire of London in 1666. Neither theatre was identified by excavations.
- 4.6.6 The 1989 Priory excavation found a thick layer of garden or agricultural soil dated to the 17th century, sealed the demolition material of the dissolution date. Cut into this layer were 18th century basements and cesspits indicative of the development of slums in the area during this period.
- 4.6.7 By 1851 Shoreditch was inhabited by 109,000 people and the area was renowned for its overcrowded and unsanitary conditions. The arrival of the railway in 1872 passing east of the study site is still in use today.
- 4.6.8 Slum clearance began in the 1920s and 30s. The area was heavily bombed during the Second World War, it was not until after this period that the area was extensively redeveloped.

5 METHODOLOGY

- 5.1 A single trench aligned north-south was excavated to determine the extent and nature of any surviving archaeological deposits or structures. The trench was located inside the existing building on the ground floor, leaving a minimum 2.00m distance between the trench edge and the exterior walls. The trench measured 8.00m north-south and 2.00m east-west. The top of the trench was at a height of 14.98m OD.
- 5.2 The trench was excavated using a mini digger, as the width of the doorway and the space of the interior restricted the size of the machine used. The trench was excavated in two halves. This was determined by the reach of the machine. An archaeologist supervised the breaking out of concrete and the machining of subsequent deposits using a toothless bucket, until sensitive features were exposed. The trench was shored at a depth of 1.20m below ground level to allow continued excavation to the base of the archaeological sequence. Features were recorded in plan and section at a scale of 1:20 and 1:10 respectively.
- 5.3 The levels in this report were taken from a benchmark located on the corner of French Place and Shoreditch High Street, which has a value of 16.04mOD.

6 ARCHAEOLOGICAL PHASE DISCUSSION

6.1 Phase 1 – Natural Deposits

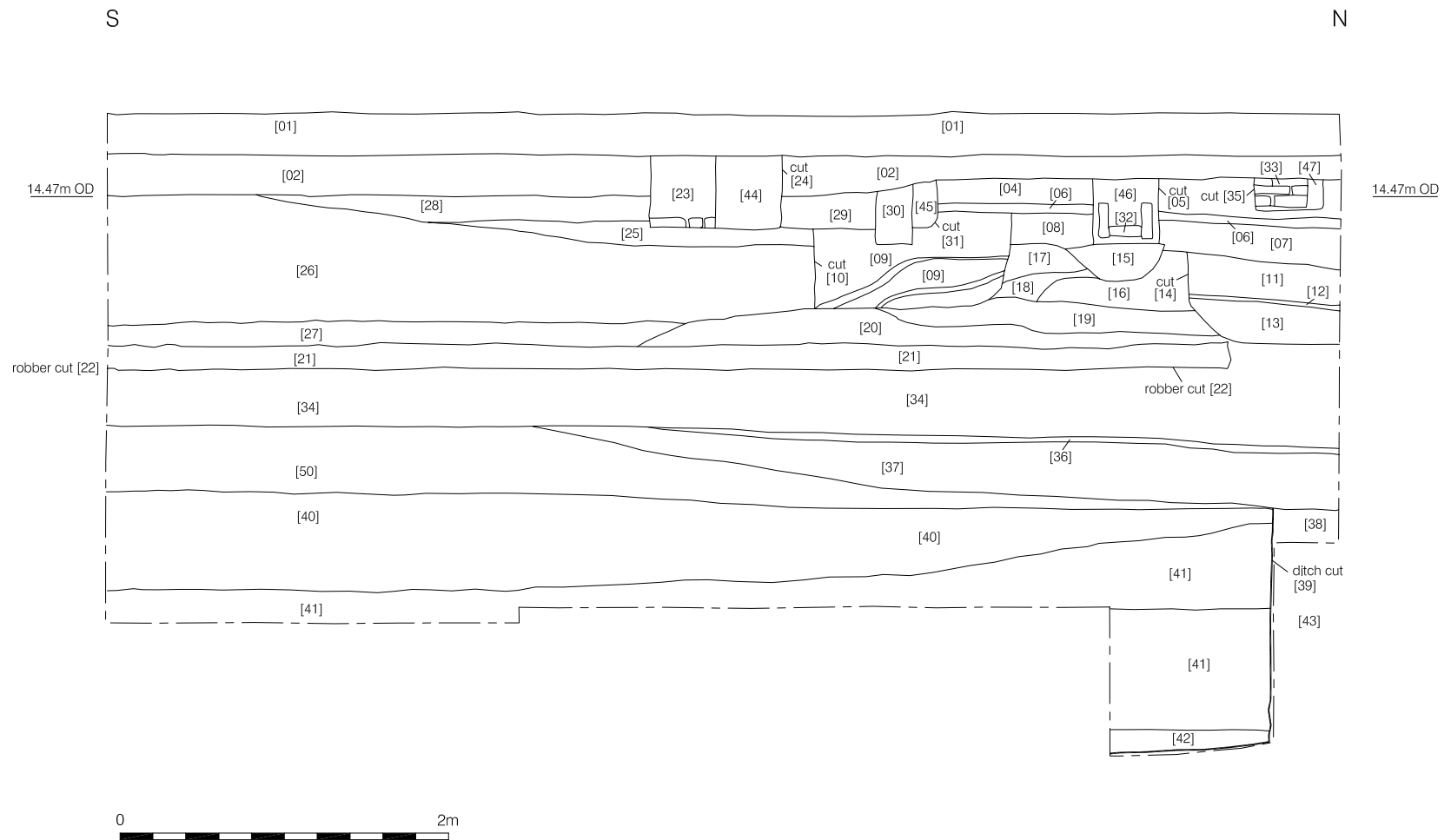
- 6.1.1 Natural Terrace Gravel [43] was observed and recorded at a depth of 12.37m OD at the northern end of the trench. This was sealed by [38], a sterile grey clayey silt recorded at a height of 12.57m OD.

6.2 Phase 2 – Medieval

- 6.2.1 A large east-west feature [39] was recorded truncating the natural clayey silt [38] at the north end of the trench. The highest level recorded for this cut was 12.57m OD, and at its northern end (the only area where it was fully excavated) it had a maximum depth of 1.45m. This feature was interpreted as forming part of the northern side of the northern boundary ditch belonging to the Priory of St John the Baptist (Holywell Priory). The ditch was in excess of 7.50m in width and was excavated to its full depth only on its northern edge. The southern edge was not located within the evaluation trench, nor was it possible within health and safety constraints to safely reveal the full depth of the ditch at the southern end of the trench.
- 6.2.2 Ditch cut [39] had four fills, [50], [40], [41] and [42]. The primary fill [42] was a very organic silt, which was sampled as a 30 litre bulk sample. This deposit is likely to have been formed by the initial deposition of organic material within the base of the open ditch. Sealing the primary fill was a clayey silt with frequent flint gravel recorded as [41]. Finds from this fill included peg tile and pottery. The pottery sherds recovered were all medieval coarse sandy-ware with a date range between 1140 AD to 1300 AD. The two latest fills, [40] and [50], were formed of mid greyish brown clayey sandy silt. No dating evidence was recovered from these deposits, which had a combined thickness of 1m and a highest level of 13.07m OD.
- 6.2.3 Sealing the ditch fills was a layer [37], a mid brownish grey sandy silt with a maximum thickness of 0.34m and a highest level of 12.91m OD. No dating evidence was recovered from this deposit.

6.3 Phase 3 - Post-Medieval

- 6.3.1 The earliest probable post-medieval deposit recorded within the trench was [36], a thin lens of a charcoal rich silt, observed across the northern 5m of the trench and recorded at a height of 12.91m. This deposit clearly derived from a burning event in the vicinity.
- 6.3.2 Charcoal deposit [36] was sealed by very dark brown sandy silt [34], interpreted as a probable agricultural horizon. This layer was exposed across the entire trench, had a thickness of between 0.60m to the north and 0.30m to the south, and was recorded at a height of 13.57m OD. Cut into this layer was a north-south orientated linear cut [22], which extended along the centre of the trench from the southern limit of excavation for 6.80m to the north, with a maximum depth of 0.15m. The fill [21] consisted of demolition material including mortar and CBM fragments. The form of the cut and the nature of the fill material suggested that this feature represented a robbed-out wall foundation, the shallow nature of which suggests it may have been horizontally truncated. Pottery sherds recovered from the fill dated to the early 18th century.
- 6.3.3 This probable robber cut was sealed by a series of mixed clayey sandy silt dumped deposits representing ground reclamation, which had maximum thickness of 0.95m, and can be stratigraphically dated to the 18th century, representing concerted ground raising activity at this time.
- 6.3.4 A late 18th early 19th century cesspit [14] was recorded cutting these dumped deposits at the northern end of the trench. The full dimensions of this pit could not be ascertained as it extended into the northern limit of excavation after 0.93m. This feature had a highest level of 14.14m OD and a maximum depth of 0.53m.
- 6.3.5 A north south wall [3] was recorded at 14.47m OD, which extended along the length of the trench. The wall had two east west returns [33] and [30] and an associated east / west drain [32]. These foundations were recorded as late 19th century in date, and are likely to relate to the original layout of the extant building. The wall foundations were sealed by a layer of demolition rubble [2], which was capped with concrete.



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Figure 3
Section 1, East facing
1:40 at A4

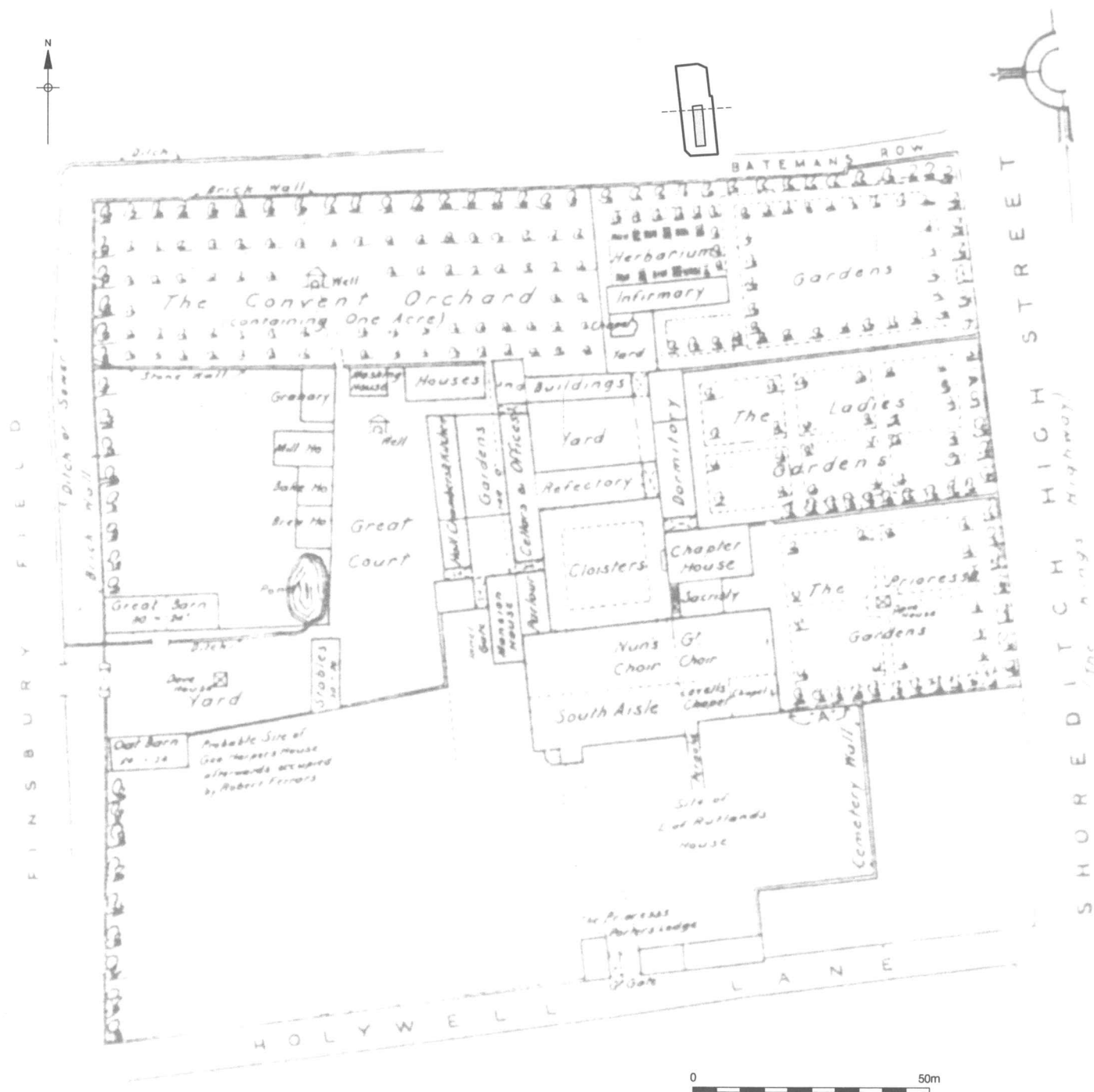


Figure 4
1927 representation of 1540 Priory
showing location of site and excavated ditch
1:1250 at A4

7 CONCLUSIONS

- 7.1 The evaluation conducted on land at 22 –24 Bateman’s Row Shoreditch, revealed natural gravel and clay silt cut by a large east - west ditch at a depth of 2.40m below the current ground level. This ditch was interpreted as forming part of the northern boundary ditch of the Holywell Priory (Figure 4). The evidence from finds includes medieval tile and pottery sherds dated 1140 – 1300. These dates coincide with the time that the Priory was founded and still in use. The southern edge of the ditch was not exposed within the confines of the trench, suggesting the ditch was in excess of 7.00m in width.
- 7.2 The ditch fills were sealed by a late medieval layer [37], which was sealed by a thin lens of a charcoal rich deposit, which may relate to the Great Fire of London in 1666. Sealing the charcoal lens was a dark agricultural layer 0.40m thick, which was truncated by a north south robber cut, dated to the early 18th century. This was sealed by a series of dumped deposits representing a concerted period of ground raising activity in the later post-medieval period. A series of 19th century walls were constructed through the upper horizon of this made-ground, and these are thought to relate to the original layout of the extant building. The walls were sealed by a layer of demolition rubble and capped with concrete.
- 7.3 There was no evidence of prehistoric, Roman, or Saxon artefacts or features on the study site.

8 Acknowledgements

Pre-construct would like to thank Architects Theis and Khan Architects for commissioning the work, and Contractors Silver Interiors for the enabling works.

The author would like to thank the following staff from Pre-construct Archaeology, Josephine Brown for the illustrations, Chris Jarret for pottery dating, Tim Bradley for his project managing and editing and Richard Archer for his work on site.

Thanks also to David Divers, English Heritage (GLAAS) for monitoring the fieldwork on behalf of the London Borough of Hackney.

9 Bibliography

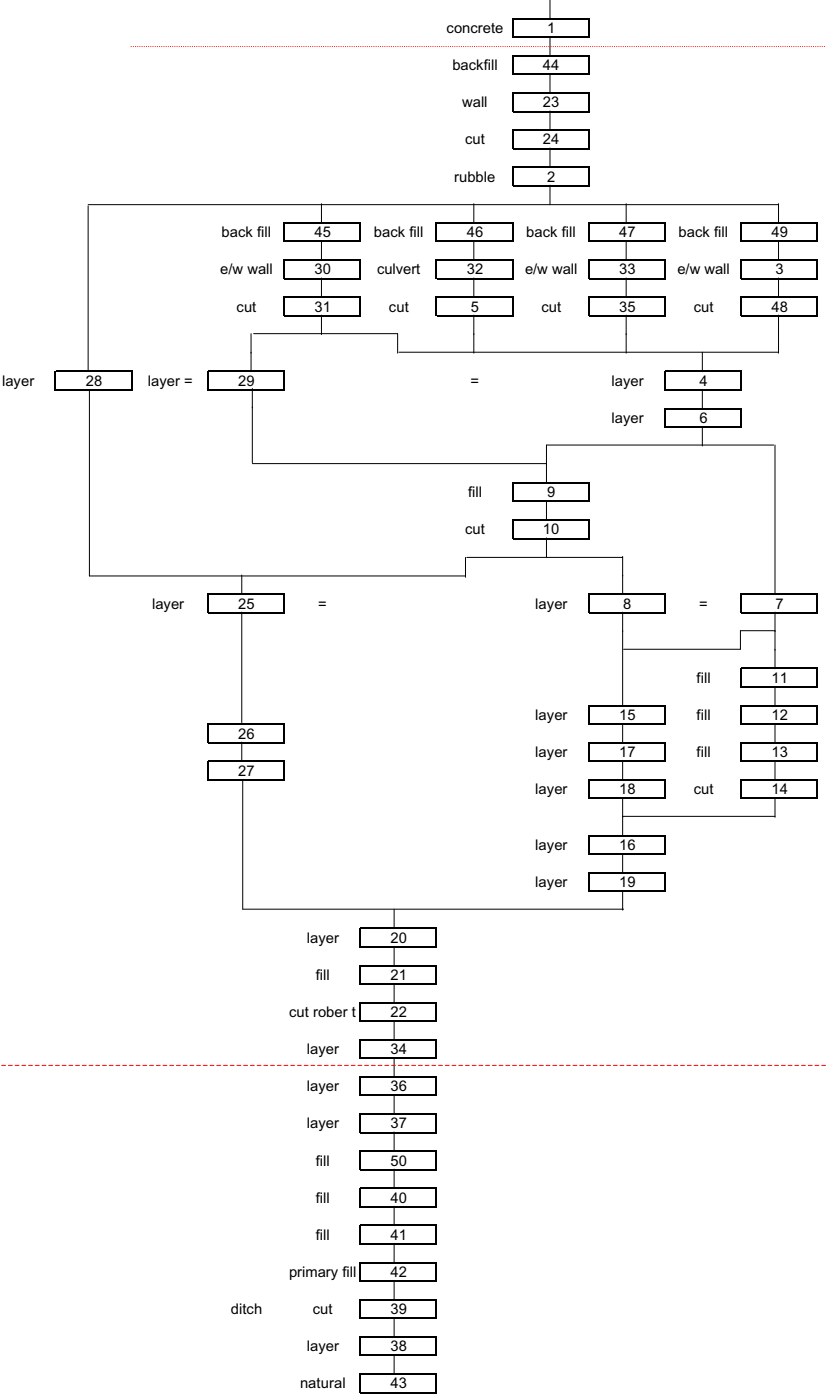
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APPENDIX 1: CONTEXT INDEX

Site Code	Context No.	Plan	Section / Elevation	Type	Description	Date	M OD	Phase
BRJ 07	1		1	slab	concrete	14/08/2007	14.98	3
BRJ 07	2		1	Layer	Rubble	14/08/2007	14.72	3
BRJ 07	3	3	1	Masonry	N/S 19th century wall	14/08/2007	14.57	3
BRJ 07	4		1	Layer	Sandy/Silt	14/08/2007	14.59	3
BRJ 07	5		1	Cut	Culvert	15/08/2007	14.57	3
BRJ 07	6		1	Layer	Coal,charcoal	15/08/2007	14.42	3
BRJ 07	7		1	Layer	Brown sandy/silt	15/08/2007	14.32	3
BRJ 07	8		1	Layer	Brown/grey sandy/silt	15/08/2007	14.37	3
BRJ 07	9		1	Fill	Fill of cut [10]	15/08/2007	14.38	3
BRJ 07	10		1	Cut	Cut of Pit	15/08/2007	14.37	3
BRJ 07	11		1	Fill	Fill of cut [14]	15/08/2007	14.12	3
BRJ 07	12		1	Fill	Fill of cut [14]	15/08/2007	13.87	3
BRJ 07	13		1	Fill	Primary fill [14]	15/08/2007	13.85	3
BRJ 07	14		1	Cut	Pit cut	15/08/2007	14.12	3
BRJ 07	15		1	Layer	Grey/brown silty/sand	15/08/2007	14.17	3
BRJ 07	16		1	Layer	Dark brown silty sand	15/08/2007	14.14	3
BRJ 07	17		1	Layer	Brown/grey sandy/silt	15/08/2007	14.17	3
BRJ 07	18		1	Layer	Grey/brown silty/sand	15/08/2007	14.03	3
BRJ 07	19		1	Layer	Grey/brown silty/sand	15/08/2007	13.86	3
BRJ 07	20		1	Layer	Dark brown sandy silt	15/08/2007	13.8	3
BRJ 07	21		1	Fill	Fill of cut [22]	15/08/2007	13.59	3
BRJ 07	22	22	1	Cut	Robber cut	15/08/2007	13.59	3
BRJ 07	23		1	Masonry	E/W Wall	15/08/2007	14.72	3
BRJ 07	24		1	Cut	Cut for (23)	15/08/2007	14.72	3
BRJ 07	25		1	Layer	Mid brown grey	15/08/2007	14.43	3
BRJ 07	26		1	Layer	Dark brown grey	15/08/2007	14.47	3
BRJ 07	27		1	Layer	Light grey silty sand	15/08/2007	13.72	3
BRJ 07	28		1	Layer	Brown/grey sandy/silt	15/08/2007	14.47	3
BRJ 07	29		1	Layer	Dark brown grey sandy silt	15/08/2007	14.5	3
BRJ 07	30		1	Masonry	East/West 19th century wall	15/08/2007	14.52	3
BRJ 07	31		1	Cut	Cut for E/W wall	15/08/2007	14.57	3
BRJ 07	32		1	Masonry	Brick culvert	15/08/2007	14.42	3
BRJ 07	33		1	Masonry	E/W wall cut [35]	15/08/2007	15.52	3
BRJ 07	34		1	Layer	Black/brown sandy silt	15/08/2007	13.57	3
BRJ 07	35		1	Cut	E/W wall [33]	15/08/2007	14.57	3
BRJ 07	36		1	Layer	Thin charcoal layer	15/08/2007	13.06	3
BRJ 07	37		1	Layer	Mid brown grey sandy silt	15/08/2007	13.07	1
BRJ 07	38		1	Layer	Grey clay silt	15/08/2007	12.57	2
BRJ 07	39		1	Cut	Priory ditch	15/08/2007	12.57	1
BRJ 07	40		1	Fill	Fill of Priory ditch	15/08/2007	12.67	2
BRJ 07	41		1	Fill	Fill of Priory ditch	15/08/2007	12.47	2
BRJ 07	42		1	Fill	Primary fill of priory ditch	15/08/2007	11.22	1

BRJ 07	43		1	Layer	Brown Natural Gravels	15/08/2007	12.37	3
BRJ 07	44		1	Fill	backfill of cut [24]	15/08/2007	14.67	3
BRJ 07	45		1	Fill	Backfill of cut [31]	15/08/2007	15.57	3
BRJ 07	46		1	Fill	Backfill of cut [05]	15/08/2007	14.57	3
BRJ 07	47		1	Fill	Backfill of cut [35]	15/08/2007	14.57	3
BRJ 07	48		1	Cut	cut for n/s wall (03)	15/08/2007	15.57	3
BRJ 07	49		1	Fill	Backfill of cut [48]	15/08/2007	14.57	3
BRJ 07	50		1	Fill	Top fill of priory ditch	22/07/2007	13.07	1

APPENDIX 2: SITE MATRIX



APPENDIX 3: OASIS DATA COLLECTION FORM

OASIS ID: preconst1-30832

Project details

Project name	Evaluation at 22 to 24 Bateman's Row Shoreditch, London
Short description of the project	The evaluation conducted on land at 22 to 24 Bateman's Row Shoreditch revealed natural gravel and clay silt cut by a large east - west ditch at a depth of 2.40m below the current ground level. This cut may relate to a ditch surrounding Holywell Priory. The evidence from finds including medieval pottery dated 1140 to 1300. These dates coincide with the time that the Priory was founded and still in use. The southern edge of the ditch was not exposed, suggesting the ditch was in excess of 7.00m in width. There was no evidence of prehistoric, Roman, or Saxon artefacts or features on the study site.
Project dates	Start: 13-08-2007 End: 22-08-2007
Previous/future work	No / Not known
Any associated project reference codes	BRJ 07 - Site code
Type of project	Field evaluation
Site status	Area of Archaeological Importance (AAI)
Current Land use	Industry and Commerce 2 - Offices
Monument type	BURIED Medieval
Significant Finds	POTTERY Medieval
Significant Finds	ROOF TILE Medieval

Project location

Country England

Site location	GREATER LONDON HACKNEY HACKNEY 22 to 24 Bateman's Row Shoreditch, London Borough of Hackney
Postcode	EC2
Study area	128.10 Square metres
Site coordinates	TQ 333 821 51.5215685487 -0.07842952664550 51 31 17 N 000 04 42 W Polygon
Height OD	Min: 11.40m Max: 12.57m

Project creators

Name of Organisation	Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd
Project brief originator	Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd
Project design originator	Tim Bradley
Project director/manager	Tim Bradley
Project supervisor	Denise Mulligan
Type of sponsor/funding body	Architectural Practice
Name of sponsor/funding body	Theis and khan Architects

Project archives

Physical Archive recipient	LAARC
Physical Contents	'Animal Bones','Ceramics','Environmental'

Entered by Denise Mulligan (dmulligan@pre-construct.com)
Entered on 28 August 2007

1 OASIS:

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