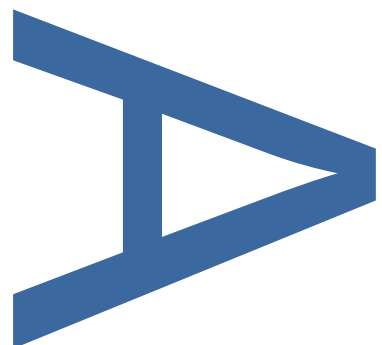
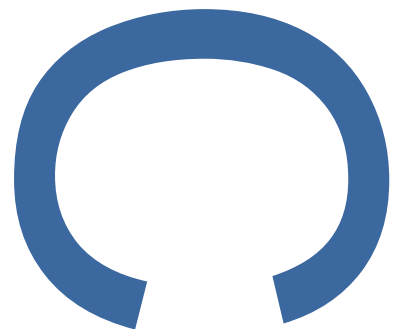


**SUMMARY OF AN
ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING
BRIEF AT COVENT GARDEN
PIAZZA, CITY OF WESTMINSTER,
LONDON**

**LOCAL PLANNING AUTHORITY: CITY OF
WESTMINSTER**

SITE CODE: CGP17

AUGUST 2018



PRE-CONSTRUCT ARCHAEOLOGY

DOCUMENT VERIFICATION
Covent Garden Piazza, City of Westminster
Type of project

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF
Quality Control

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SUMMARY OF AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF AT COVENT GARDEN PIAZZA, CITY OF WESTMINSTER, LONDON

Central National Grid Reference: TQ 30335 80935

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May 2018**

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1. INTRODUCTION, METHODOLOGY, AND BACKGROUND

1.1. Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd was commissioned by FM Conway to undertake a watching brief during the excavation of three trial holes (TH13, TH14, and TH15) within the southern end of James Street, at Covent Garden. They were excavated on 11 October 2017 as an exercise to inform upon ground conditions and restraints in advance of the proposed Covent Garden HVM Scheme. The main contractor (FM Conway) excavated the trial holes by hand under constant archaeological supervision by Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited (PCA).

1.2. All archaeological interventions were thoroughly hand cleaned before being hand-planned at a scale of 1:20, with sections being drawn at 1:10. The deposits that they contained were recorded on pro forma context sheets and a full digital photographic record was compiled.

1.3. The trial holes had the following details:

Trial Hole	Ground Level	Dimensions NE-SW	Dimensions NW-SE	Depth
TH13	21.20m OD	1.40m	1.20m	-
TH14	21.29m OD	1.00m	1.10m	0.70m
TH15	21.15m OD	1.20m	0.90m	0.80m

1.4. Covent Garden has a rich history, with evidence of activity in the surrounding area dating back to the late prehistoric period (Thompson 2008). However, occupation of the area did not occur until the early medieval period, with a small riverside settlement established around the Strand by AD 600. Excavations at the site of the London Transport Museum uncovered burials which have been dated to the first half of the 6th century; a number of cemeteries were established on open and previously unoccupied ground on the outskirts of the new settlement, with one situated to the north at the Royal Opera House Covent Garden. This cemetery appears to have remained in use throughout the first half of the 7th century, with inhumations having been recorded at 29 James Street, Cubitts Yard (32 James Street), and Floral Street (Leary 2004; Malcolm *et al* 2003).

1.5. The expansion of *Lundenwic*, the trading town which developed from this settlement, occurred rapidly, and the open burial area at James Street and the Royal Opera House was divided into plots delineated by fence lines. Subsequently, the area became subject to successive phases of intensive activity during the late 7th and early 8th centuries; archaeological investigations have identified evidence of increased settlement, crafts and industrial activity during the decades between c. AD

675-730. *Lundenwic* entered a decline towards the end of the 8th century, experiencing a series of devastating fires followed by Viking raids (Malcolm *et al* 2003). A substantial east-west defensive ditch was constructed at the Royal Opera House, truncating earlier buildings; dating evidence suggests that it was dug no later than the late AD 840s or 850s, around the same time as the earliest Viking raids (Thompson 2008). The settlement was abandoned by the second half of the 9th century.

- 1.6. During the medieval period, the site lay within the Convent Garden, a 40-acre area of pasture belonging to the Abbey (and Convent) of St Peter at Westminster. An order of mendicant friars established a house on the site of the future James Street in 1267, and though they were no longer in residence by 1316, the two plots of land previously held by the order continued to be leased separately until the Dissolution, when they were surrendered to the Crown (Thompson 2008). Although the surrounding area became used for a variety of purposes, the site remained as undeveloped pasture land until the early 17th century. The development of Covent Garden commenced in 1631, on the four-sided area formerly occupied by the 'great pasture', and by 1638, James Street was fully occupied. Archaeological evidence of cut features, such as brick drains and soakaways that have been built since the 1630s, have been recorded at excavations at 28, 30, and 32 James Street as well as 33 Floral Street (Leary 2001; Thompson 2008). The terraced buildings in the southern half of James Street, which have stood within their plot boundaries since the 17th century, have been subject to several phases of alteration, re-fronting and rebuilding. By the late 19th century, the majority of the former houses had been converted into shops or warehouses, with the market trade gaining a complete hold over James Street by the 1930s.

2. ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESULTS

2.1. Trial Hole 13

- 2.1.1. This trial hole was only excavated to a shallow depth (less than 0.10m) before being abandoned due to the presence of services. Thus, no archaeological remains were observed.

2.2. Trial Hole 14

- 2.2.1. A water main ran north-east to south-west along the base of Trial Hole 14. Along the north-western half of the trench, compact dark grey brown gravel, [8], partly overlay the water main. Continuing into the limit of excavation and beyond the base of the trench, this layer was 0.07m thick. The north-eastern half of the trench was occupied by two layers, [6] and [7], which both partly overlay the water main. Layer [6] was composed of friable dark grey brown sandy silt with frequent ceramic building material (CBM) fragments and occasional gravel. This layer measured 0.80m by 0.36m, continuing into the north-eastern and south-eastern limits of excavation; it had a maximum thickness of 0.25m. Layer [7] was composed of a firm mid yellow brown silty sand with frequent brick fragments and gravel. It is highly likely that layers [6], [7], and [8] are all modern in date, given their presence overlying a water main; however, there is the possibility that they date from the late 19th century.

2.3. Trial Hole 15

- 2.3.1. Two parallel walls, [4] and [5], were the earliest recorded features in this trial hole. The walls were both composed of red unfrogged bricks, measuring 300mm x 100mm x 80mm, with rendered internal faces. It is thought that these walls possibly formed some sort of brick lined channel or soakaway, with the later addition of wall [1] running between walls [4] and [5]. Wall [1] was composed of both red and yellow bricks, and was at least three courses high. This single-skin wall measured 0.65m in length, 0.10m in width, and 0.25m in height. Overlying walls [4] and [5] was possible surface [3]. Also composed of red brick, this surface measured 1.05m by 0.65m, and was bonded with a light grey/white sandy mortar. It is possible that this collection of masonry, c. 0.50m below ground level, relates to the original development of Covent Garden in the 17th century. Brick drains and soakaways dating to the 17th and 18th century have been recorded at nearby excavations on James Street, c. 30m to the north-west of the site.

3. CONCLUSIONS

- 3.1. The trial holes excavated thus far have confirmed the density of service runs predicted to lie beneath the pavements of the study area; however, despite the presence of services, archaeological remains were encountered in trial holes TH14 and TH15.
- 3.2. The natural geology was not reached in any of the trial holes, as none were deeper than 0.80m below ground level.
- 3.3. Masonry uncovered c.0.50m below ground level in TH15 is possibly related to the early development of Covent Garden in the 17th and 18th centuries, as nearby excavations on James Street have revealed intact brick drains, cess pits, and soakaways from this time period.
- 3.4. The layers recorded in TH14 are likely late 19th/20th century in date, as they overly a water main.
- 3.5. No archaeological remains were uncovered in the excavation to TH13, as shallow services were present, and the trial hole was not excavated to its proposed depth.
- 3.6. The work reported here represents three trial holes excavated to determine the location of services and archaeological remains before the final locations of the proposed work can be undertaken. It is understood that the proposed work will be executed at a later date, and will be subject to further monitoring by PCA, with the results then incorporated with those from this phase of work into a full watching brief report.
- 3.7. Once all phases of the proposed fieldwork is complete and the reporting finalised, the results of the site investigation will be published as a minimum by PCA as a summary in the annual 'Round-Up' of London Archaeologist.
- 3.8. Upon approval of all works and with confirmation that the project is complete, the archive will be deposited with the London Archaeological Archive and Research Centre identified by site code **CGP17**.

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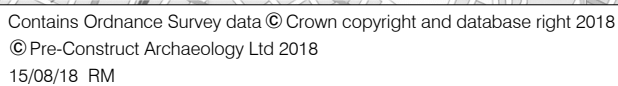


Figure 1
Site Location
1:20,000 at A4



Figure 2
Detailed Site Location
1:500 at A4

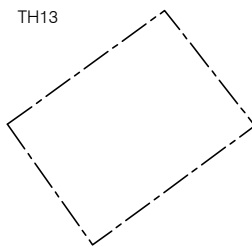
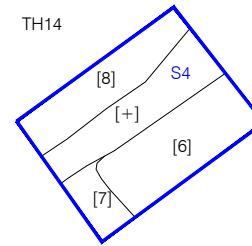
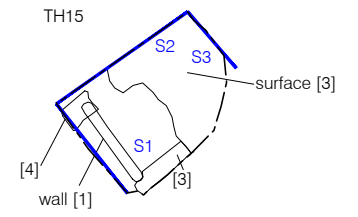
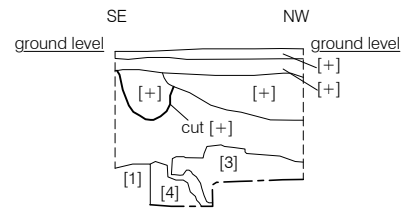
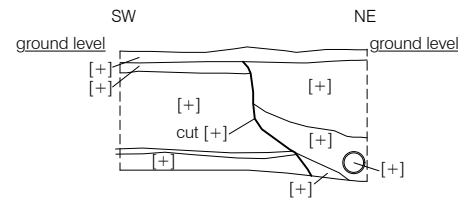


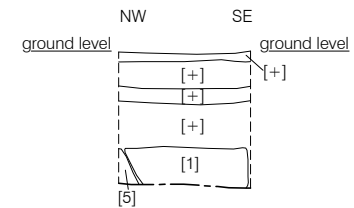
Figure 3
Plan of Features
1:60 at A4



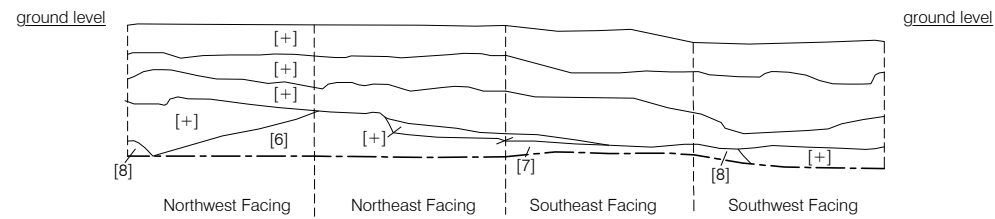
Section 1
TH 15
Northeast Facing



Section 2
TH 15
Southeast Facing



Section 3
TH 15
Southwest Facing



Section 4
TH 14



APPENDIX 1: PLATES



Plate 1: Trial Hole 13 showing services



Plate 2: Trial Hole 14 showing water main



Plate 3: Trial Hole 14 showing [6] and [7]



Plate 4: Trial Hole 15 showing masonry

APPENDIX 2: CONTEXT INDEX

Site Code	Context	Context Type	Trial Hole	Interpretation	Dimensions		
					NE-SW	NW-SE	Depth
CGP17	1	Masonry	TH15	Wall	0.65m	0.10m	0.25m
CGP17	2	VOID	VOID	VOID	-	-	-
CGP17	3	Masonry	TH15	Surface	0.65m	1.05m	0.30m
CGP17	4	Masonry	TH15	Wall	0.20m	0.25m	0.08m
CGP17	5	Masonry	TH15	Wall	0.12m	0.40m	0.20m
CGP17	6	Layer	TH14	Backfill	0.80m	0.40m	0.25m
CGP17	7	Layer	TH14	Backfill	0.30m	0.40m	0.05m
CGP17	8	Layer	TH14	Backfill	1.00m	0.35m	0.07m

APPENDIX 3: OASIS DATA COLLECTION FORM

OASIS ID: preconst1-326162

Project details

Project name	Covent Garden Piazza, City of Westminster
Short description of the project	Pre-Construct Archaeology (PCA) was commissioned by FM Conway to undertake a watching brief during the excavation of three trial holes within the southern end of James Street, Covent Garden. They were excavated as an exercise to inform upon ground conditions and restraints in advance of the proposed Covent Garden HVM Scheme. No archaeological remains pre-dating the post-medieval period were identified. Masonry revealed in one trial hole is believed to relate to the early development of Covent Garden in the 17th and 18th centuries.
Project dates	Start: 11-10-2017 End: 11-10-2017
Previous/future work	Not known / Yes
Any associated project reference codes	CGP17 - Sitecode
Type of project	Recording project
Current Land use	Transport and Utilities 1 - Highways and road transport
Monument type	WALL Post Medieval
Investigation type	"Watching Brief"
Prompt	Planning condition

Project location

Country	England
Site location	GREATER LONDON CITY OF WESTMINSTER CITY OF WESTMINSTER An Archaeological Watching Brief at Covent Garden

	Piazza, City of Westminster, London
Postcode	WC2E 8BH
Study area	40 Square metres
Site coordinates	TQ 303 809 51.511485002324 -0.122094136255 51 30 41 N 000 07 19 W Point

Project creators

Name of Organisation	Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited
Project brief originator	GLAAS
Project design originator	Chris Mayo
Project director/manager	Chris Mayo
Project supervisor	Tom Brook
Type of sponsor/funding body	Developer
Name of sponsor/funding body	FM Conway

Project archives

Physical Archive Exists?	No
Digital Archive recipient	LAARC
Digital Archive ID	CGP17

Digital Media available	"Text"
Paper Archive recipient	LAARC
Paper Archive ID	CGP17
Paper Media available	"Context sheet", "Miscellaneous Material", "Plan", "Report", "Section"

Project bibliography 1

Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
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