

85 GRACECHURCH STREET

CITY OF LONDON, EC3

WATCHING BRIEF

SEPTEMBER 2004

GHC 04

85 Gracechurch Street, City of London, EC3

Archaeological Watching Brief

Site Code: GHC 04

Central National Grid Reference: TQ 3304 8105

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Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited
September 2004**

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CONTENTS

1	Abstract	3
2	Introduction	4
3	Planning Background	7
4	Geology And Topography	8
5	Archaeological and Historical Background	9
6	Methodology	10
7	The Archaeological Sequence	11
8	Conclusions And Recommendations	12
9	Acknowledgements	13

Illustrations

Figure 1 - Site Location Plan	5
Figure 2 – Plan excavation locations	6
Appendix 1 OASIS form	14

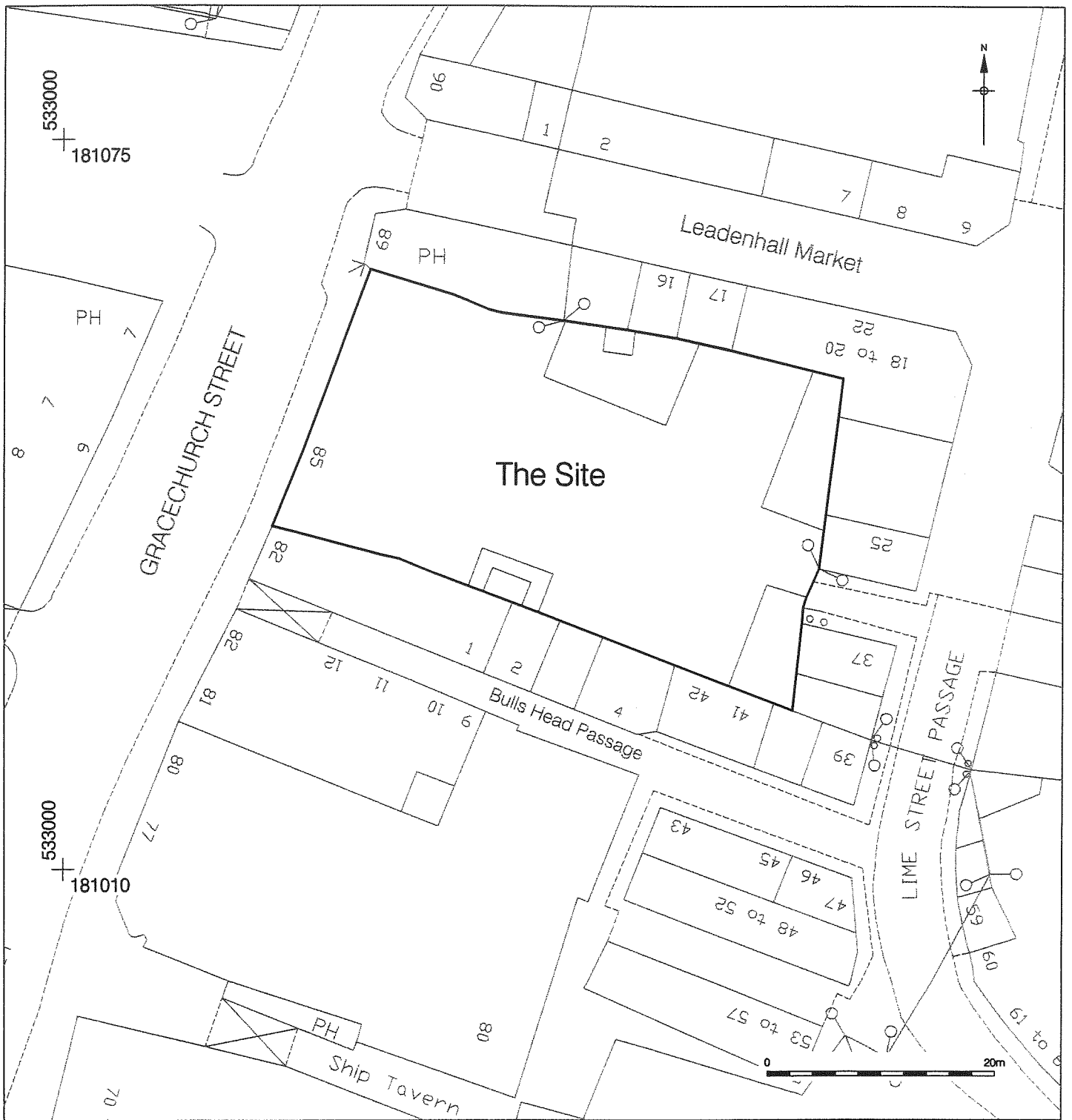
1 ABSTRACT

- 1.1 The following is a report on an archaeological watching brief undertaken by Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited (PCA) between 15th and 22nd August at 85 Gracechurch Street, City of London, London EC3 (see fig.1).
- 1.2 The site works consisted of a watching brief during excavation work associated with new below ground drainage within the rear north and south light wells at 85 Gracechurch Street. The trenches were dug to c. 600mm below basement slab level.
- 1.3 The watching brief revealed only modern make up layers for the basement slab layer.

2 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited between 15th and 22nd August 2004 at 85 Gracechurch Street, City of London, London EC3 (National Grid Reference: TQ 3304 8105). The work was commissioned by TMD Building Consultancy Ltd. The site was project managed for PCA by David Divers and supervised by the author.
- 2.2 The watching brief followed the methodologies set out in the Greater London Archaeology Advisory Service Guidance Papers¹ and the Method Statement compiled by David Divers of Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited.
- 2.3 The site archive will be stored at the Museum of London's London Archaeological Archive and Research centre under the Site Code GHC 04.
- 2.4 The areas of excavation were located within the basement of the standing building at 85 Gracechurch Street. The site is bound to the east by Lime Street Passage, to the north by Leadenhall Market, to the west by Gracechurch Street and to the south by Bulls Head Passage.
- 2.5 The drainage trenches were excavated to a depth of c. 600mm.
- 2.6 The Research Design of the watching brief was as follows
- To establish the presence of any Roman remains on the site and how they relate to the Early Basilica and later Forum. Can these remains help understand these two phases of this complex.
 - To establish the presence of any pre-Roman activity on the site.
 - To establish the presence and nature of early Roman remains which predate the first Forum.
 - To establish of occupation contemporary with, but external to the early Forum.
 - To establish the presence of any remains relating to post-Roman activity on the site.
 - Can observations of surviving remains help inform on long-term preservation and management of these remains.

¹ English Heritage, Greater London Archaeology Advisory Service, "Archaeological Guidance Papers: 1 Written Schemes of Investigation; 2 Desk-Based Assessments; 3 Standards and Practices in Archaeological Fieldwork in London; Archaeological Reports; 5 Evaluations", Revised June 1998.



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Figure 1
Detailed Site Location
1:500



Figure 2
 Location of excavated drain runs
 1:200

3 PLANNING BACKGROUND

3.1 Planning Policy Guidance Note 16

3.1.1 In November 1990 the Department of the Environment issued Planning Policy Guidance Note 16 (PPG16) 'Archaeology and Planning'. It provided guidance for planning authorities, property owners, developers and others on the preservation and investigation of archaeological remains.

3.1.2 The advice states 'the desirability of preserving an ancient monument and its setting is a material consideration in determining planning applications whether that monument is scheduled or unscheduled. Developers and local authorities should take into account archaeological considerations and deal with them from the beginning of the development control process' (paragraph 18).

3.1.3 It also states 'where nationally important archaeological remains, whether scheduled or not, are affected by proposed development there should be a presumption in favour of their physical preservation' (paragraph 8).

4 GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY

- 4.1 Published geological records (British Geological Survey, 1:50,000 series England and Wales Sheet 256 'North London') indicates the site is underlain by Taplow Gravels overlain by Langley Silt or 'brickearth' that has been found on Forum sites to be over 2m thick.
- 4.2 The recording of features during the construction of 83-87 Gracechurch Street in 1934 is known as Site 14 in Peter Marsden's (1987) 'The Roman Forum Site in London'. Natural brickearth was generally located at c. 11.30m OD. In several instances it was observed at heights of 10.82m OD, 10.59m OD and 10.03m OD but these were thought to represent areas of disturbance in the natural subsoil. The top of the gravel which underlay the brickearth was also observed at varying depths suggesting it had an uneven surface level, but was generally located at between 10.65-11.00m OD.

5 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

- 5.1 The site lies in the heart of the Roman city and on the site of the Forum. For a summary of the archaeological evidence concerning the Forum see Gustav Milne's 'From Roman Basilica to Medieval Market' and Marsden (ibid.) particularly pages 119-129.
- 5.2 Observations at Site 14 included significant remains of the eastern end of the first Basilica, at the northern end of the Forum, built in c. 70-80 AD. These remains were located on the western part of the site. Masonry associated with the eastern side of the early 2nd century forum were found on the eastern part of the site, the majority of the site being located within the Forum. It was noted during the archaeological observations that more than half of the Roman remains will still survive in situ.
- 5.3 No deposits earlier than early Roman (pre-Flavian) were recorded at the site.
- 5.4 A watching brief in 1995 (GRC 95) again confirmed that Roman remains do survive on the site but were not excavated, except in the location of a new lift shaft.

6 METHODOLOGY

- 6.1 The location of the below basement slab works are shown in Figure 2 and involved the excavation of new drain runs within the rear north and south light wells. The areas of proposed groundworks were broken out and modern fill removed by contractors under archaeological supervision. The South Light well Pit 2 measured c. 0.60m E-W by c. 0.30m N-S whilst the North Light well Pit 1 measured c. 2m N-S by 0.30m. Excavation by non-archaeological contractors was to stop when archaeological remains are encountered.
- 6.2 Following the rubble and debris clearance, all exposed surfaces in any pit or trench were to be cleaned using appropriate hand tools. Should archaeological features have been present, the matter was to be brought to the attention of the client and Kathryn Stubbs, Archaeological Officer Corporation of London. Sufficient time would then be built into the programme of works to allow full archaeological recording and excavation to take place on all archaeological features and deposits revealed.
- 6.3 All investigation of archaeological levels, features and structures was to be by hand, with cleaning, examination and recording both in plan and in section. Excavation was not to take place on deposits or structures of archaeological significance until guidance had been sought from Kathryn Stubbs, Archaeological Officer Corporation of London.
- 6.4 Excavation was carried out using appropriate hand tools. Only tools suitable for the purpose were used for the hand excavation. Investigation was limited to identifying the extent and nature of the deposits and to recover dating evidence. All archaeological features (stratigraphical layers, cuts, fills, structures) were to be recorded using standard recording methods.
- 6.5 The watching brief aimed to determine, as far as is reasonably possible, the location extent, date, character, condition, significance and quality of any surviving archaeological remains, and attention should be given to sites and remains of all periods.
- 6.6 All relevant health and safety legislation, CDM, COSHH regulations and codes of practice were respected. The Health and Safety policies of Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited were followed and were in accordance with all statutory regulations.

7 THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SEQUENCE

- 7.1 In both drainage pits below the 0.20m thick concrete slab [01] was [02] a c. 0.40m layer of 20th century made ground comprising a mid grey sandy silt with fragments of brick rubble and mortar. In the drainage pit in the north light well excavation stopped when E-W aligned cable runs were located, no further excavation was carried out.

8 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- 8.1 The archaeological watching brief did not reveal any material that was earlier than 20th century in date due to the shallow depth of the interventions. Consequently the main objectives of the research design could not be met. The site location indicates that any further works that penetrate to a greater depth are extremely likely to encounter archaeological material of national importance and should be monitored.

9 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- 9.1** Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited would like to David Copsey of TMD Building Consultancy Ltd for commissioning the work. The author would like to thank Steve Every for the illustrations and David Divers for his project management.

APPENDIX 1 OASIS REPORT FORM

OASIS ID: preconst1-3836

Project details

Project name	85 Gracechurch Street
Short description of the project	Watching brief on two small drainage runs. No archaeological deposits encountered.
Project dates	Start: 15-08-2004 End: 22-08-2004
Previous/future work	Yes / Not known
Any associated project reference codes	GHC 04 – Site code
Type of project	Recording project
Site status	Local Authority Designated Archaeological Area
Current Land use	Industry and Commerce 2 - Offices
Current Land use	Industry and Commerce 3 - Retailing
Investigation type	'Watching Brief'

Project location

Country	England
Site location	GREATER LONDON CITY OF LONDON CITY OF LONDON 85 Gracechurch Street
Postcode	EC3
Study area	1200 Square metres
National grid reference	TQ 3304 8105 Point

Project creators

Name of Organisation	Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd
Project brief originator	Local Authority Archaeologist and/or Planning Authority/advisory body
Project design originator	David Divers
Project director/manager	David Divers
Project supervisor	Chris Pickard

Project archives

Archive recipient	LAARC
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Project bibliography 1

Publication type	An unpublished document/manuscript
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