

14-20 NEW INN BROADWAY AND
17-25 NEW INN YARD,
SHOREDITCH,
LONDON BOROUGH OF HACKNEY

EXCAVATION AND WATCHING BRIEF

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AUGUST 2004

NIY 03

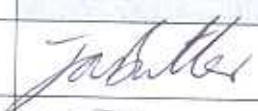

PRE-CONSTRUCT ARCHAEOLOGY

DOCUMENT VERIFICATION

14-20 New Inn Broadway and 17-25 New Inn Yard,
Shoreditch, London Borough of Hackney

Excavation and Watching Brief

Quality Control

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Revision No.	Date	Checked	Approved

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**14-20 New Inn Broadway and 17-25 New Inn Yard, Shoreditch, London
Borough of Hackney**

Excavation and Watching Brief

Site Code: NIY 03

Central National Grid Reference: 3336 8240

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September 2004**

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1 ABSTRACT

- 1.1 This report details the results of an archaeological excavation and watching brief undertaken by Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited at 14 – 20 New Inn Broadway and 17 – 25 New Inn Yard, Shoreditch, London Borough of Hackney during the refurbishment of the existing early 20th century building (Fig 1).
- 1.2 The work followed an earlier watching brief conducted during the excavation of geotechnical test pits which identified surviving archaeological deposits from the Roman period in the southern part of the building where the basement floors were relatively high.
- 1.3 The archaeological work involved a single excavation area in the southern part of the building where Roman dump layers were recorded. These deposits yielded little in the way of cultural evidence although fragments of ceramic material recovered could reasonably be dated to 1st or 2nd Century AD¹. A watching brief during groundworks in the northern part of the building revealed no archaeological deposits but truncated natural deposits were encountered.
- 1.4 The Roman deposits were of limited archaeological significance. There was no surviving evidence of the medieval priory that had once occupied the site, or of any later activity.

¹ Berni Sudds, pers comm..

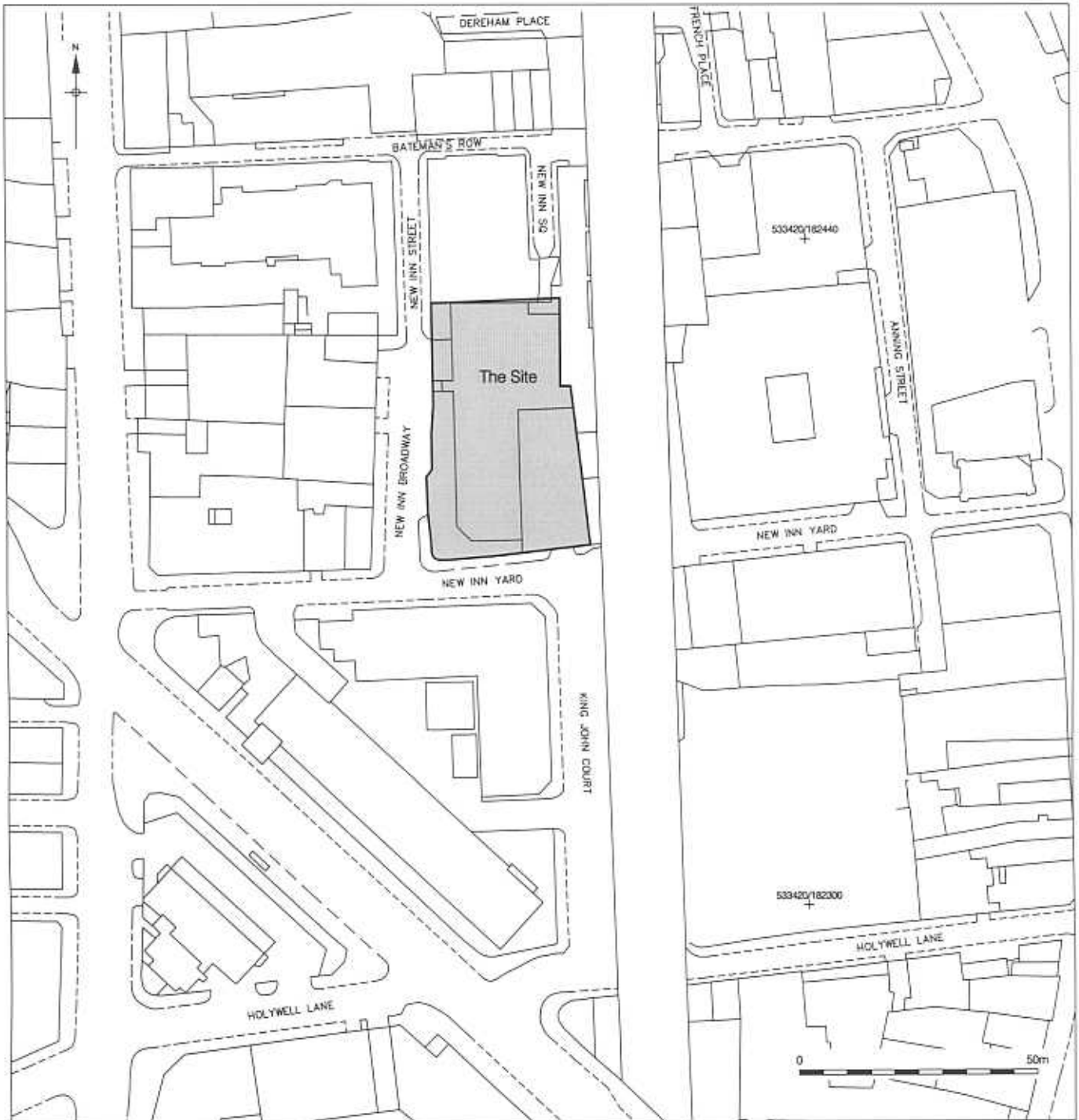
2 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 An archaeological excavation and watching brief were conducted by Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd. at 14 – 20 New Inn Broadway and 17 – 25 New Inn Yard, Shoreditch, London Borough of Hackney EC2A (Figure 1). The site is bordered to the south by New Inn Yard and to the west by New Inn Broadway. The building backs onto Bateman’s Row on its northern side, and has a car park to its east, adjacent to a 19th century railway viaduct. National Grid Reference of the site is TQ 3336 8240.
- 2.2 The work, which was conducted during the refurbishment of an early 20th century building, followed an archaeological desk top assessment² and watching brief³ of the site conducted during 2003. The desk top assessment had identified a potential for encountering significant archaeological remains of a medieval priory that had occupied the site and the initial watching brief revealed the survival of Roman deposits on the site and although no medieval remains were encountered, their survival on the site could not be discounted.
- 2.3 The excavation was conducted between the 6th and the 9th of January 2004 as part of a groundworks scheme prior to the installation of a stairwell and lift. Due to the limited significance of the deposits encountered, following a site meeting with Nick Truckle of English Heritage’s Greater London Archaeological Advisory Service, further archaeological hand excavation was halted, and further ground works were monitored as part of the ongoing watching brief, which continued intermittently until 27th February 2004 (Figure 2).
- 2.4 The archaeological work was commissioned by Parkeray, the main contractors on the construction project managed by Cluttons Project and Building Consultancy on behalf of Amnesty International UK.
- 2.5 The work was undertaken following a method statement⁴ by Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd based on discussions with English Heritage’s Greater London Archaeological Advisory Service. The fieldwork was supervised by Chris Pickard and then by the author, and the archaeological project manager was David Divers.
- 2.6 The archaeological archive will be stored at the Museum of London’s London Archaeological Archive Research Centre under the site code NIY 03.

² Clough 2003

³ Mayo 2003

⁴ Divers, D., 2003.



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Figure 1
Site location
1:1250

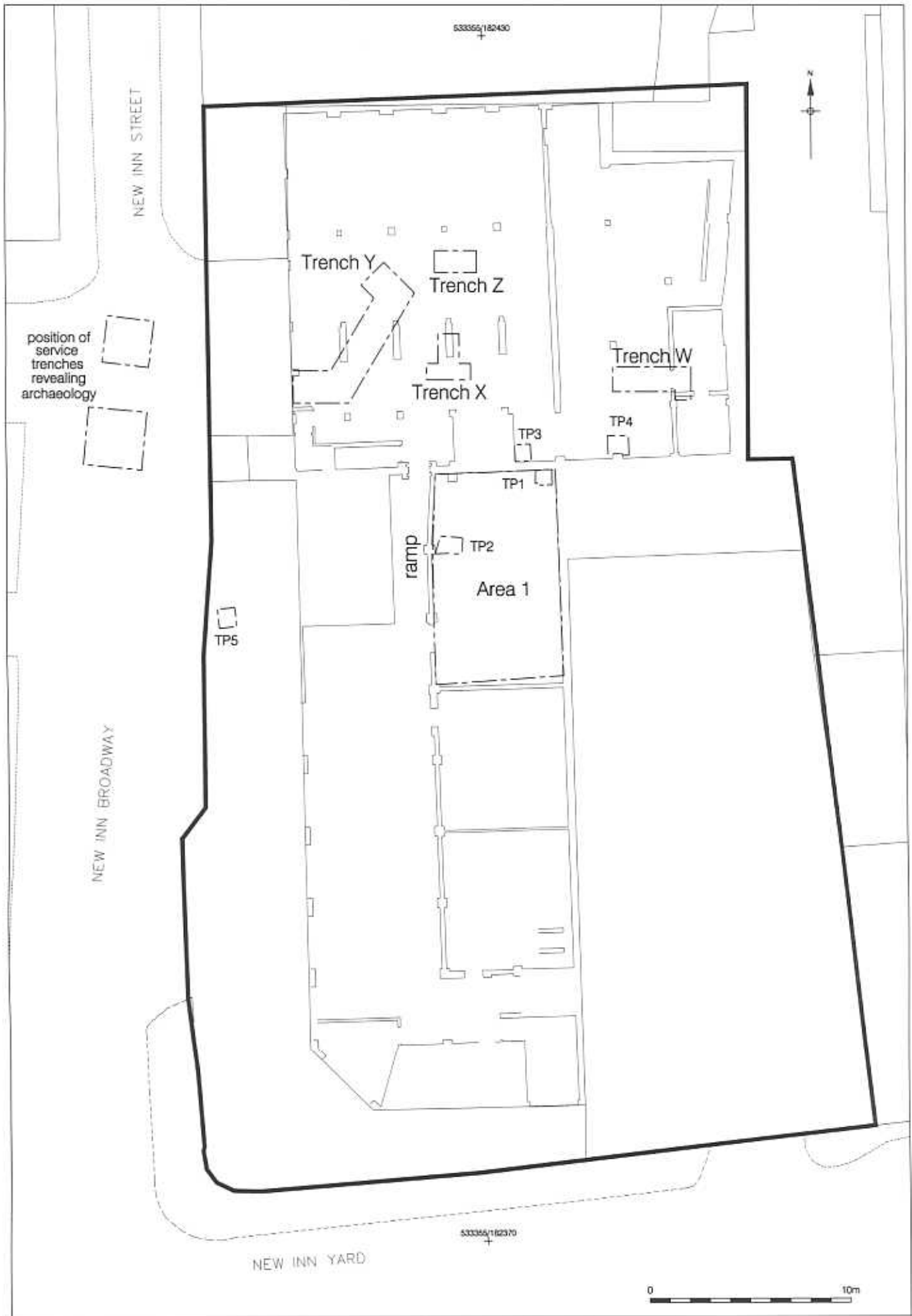


Figure 2
 Areas of Watching Brief
 showing previous Test Pit locations
 1:250

3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The archaeological and historical background to the site and its environs has been covered in detail in the desk-top assessment for the site⁵. This information is summarised here.
- 3.2 Evidence for prehistoric activity in the vicinity is rare, limited to the discovery of a flint tranchet axe in Great Eastern Street to the west.
- 3.3 Roman material has been found close by, during works in 1989 immediately to the south. The site is also close to the route of Ermine Street, which follows the line of Shoreditch High Street and Kingsland Road to the east. Tradition has long connected the area around Holywell Lane, to the south, with the source of the Walbrook stream, a tributary of the river Thames important during Roman times.
- 3.4 The area of the site was an important one in medieval times lying within the precinct of Holywell Priory. Excavations at Holywell Lane to the south of the site in 1989 found remains of the priory church and other buildings approximately 2.5m below current ground surface⁶. In addition recent excavations in August 2003 associated with the maintenance of sewers in New Inn Broadway revealed human remains at a depth of c. 3m below ground level in the northernmost of their two excavations (see Fig 2).
- 3.5 Following the Dissolution in 1539 two Tudor theatres were built in the vicinity of the site, one of which was a precursor to the Globe on the South Bank. The Shoreditch area became impoverished in the post-medieval period, leading to the slum tenements which were built locally in the 18th and 19th centuries. The building which currently stands on the site was built in the 20th century. It has a split level basement; the southern half of which is at a level approximately 1m higher than the northern half.

⁵ Clough, H., 2003.

⁶ Miller, P., 1999, in Mayo, C., 2003.

4 GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY

- 4.1 The geology of the site area is Hackney Gravels, overlain by a sandy-silt brickearth deposit. The natural deposits have been eroded over time by a number of tributaries of the Thames; the Walbrook being one of these streams⁷.
- 4.2 The site currently occupies level ground.

⁷ Mayo, C., 2003.

5 METHODOLOGY

- 5.1 The excavation and watching brief was conducted according to the method statement prepared by Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd⁸. This phase of archaeological work followed a watching brief during the excavation of 5 geotechnical test-pits (Tp 1-5; Fig 2) which showed that archaeological deposits survived in the southern half of the building. In addition, excavations in 2003 by utility contractors outside the building in New Inn Broadway uncovered human remains.
- 5.2 The excavation area (Area 1: Fig 2) which measured approximately 6.0m by 10.0m, was broken out by the contractors who also removed of the underlying material under archaeological supervision until archaeological deposits were encountered. Any archaeological deposits were recorded and initially excavated by hand by archaeological staff.
- 5.3 During the course of the work it was realised that the strata, which comprised heavily compacted gravel, was of limited archaeological significance the excavation was turned over to a watching brief by agreement with Nick Truckle, English Heritage GLAAS monitor for East London.
- 5.4 Individual descriptions of all archaeological strata and features excavated and exposed were entered onto *pro-forma* recording sheets. The archaeological deposits and features were assigned individual context numbers. Drawings of the deposits were made in plan at a scale of 1:20 and in section at a scale of 1:10. A photographic record of the investigations was also prepared using both black and white print and colour transparencies.
- 5.5 Excavation in the ramp area immediately west of Area 1 was monitored by an archaeologist but no archaeological deposits survived in this area.
- 5.6 The watching brief in the northern building was also conducted according to the specifications set out in the method statement⁹. The basement slab was broken out by mini-digger and powered hand-operated tools and four trenches were excavated (trenches W, X, Y and Z. Removal of the underlying material was monitored until archaeological deposits were encountered or until the contractors reached the required depth. As no archaeologically significant deposits were encountered in these trenches, there was no further hand excavation, other than for examination and recording.

⁸ Divers, D., 2003

⁹ Divers, D., 2003

5.7 The levels referred to in this report were taken relative to an Ordnance Survey Bench Mark located on the railway bridge over New Inn Yard to the east of the site, with the value of 15.6m OD.

6 ARCHAEOLOGICAL SEQUENCE

6.1 Phase 1.1: Natural

6.1.1 Natural sandy gravel [20] was observed in Trenches w, x, y, and z in the northern part of the building, and also in Area 1 in the southern basement where it had an untruncated level of 11.10m OD.

6.1.2 Overlying the natural gravel [20] in Area 1 were a number of greenish sandy layers up to 0.35m thick [17], [18] and [19]. Context [18] extended across the entire excavation area (area 1) where it was not truncated by modern intrusions while the slightly gravelly layer [19] and the silty layer [17] were confined to isolated areas. These differing compositions presumably reflect localised variation in deposition conditions.

6.2 Phase 2: Roman dumping

6.2.1 Roman gravel dump layers were recorded overlying the sandy deposits 11.84m OD with a maximum level of 11.58m OD. These dumps were between 0.15m and 0.5m thick reflecting undulations in the underlying sandy deposits. Two sherds of abraded Roman pottery and a fragment of tile were recovered from this layer suggesting a deposition date during the 1st or 2nd century AD. This gravel layer was probably dumped for ground consolidation and levelling. Similar Roman deposits have been found overlying the green natural sands elsewhere in the vicinity.

6.3 Phase 3: Later dumping?

6.3.1 Above the Roman deposits was a layer [11] of stiff sandy clay up to 0.2m thick at a maximum level of 12.02m OD. The layer produced a small sherd of Cheam ware which dates from 1350 to 1500 possibly indicating the date of this deposit, although its small size does not discount the possibility that this isolated find was intrusive.

6.4 Phase 4: 20th Century Activity

6.4.1 The dumped deposits appeared to be truncated by the basement floor, foundations and other features relating to the present standing building on the site.

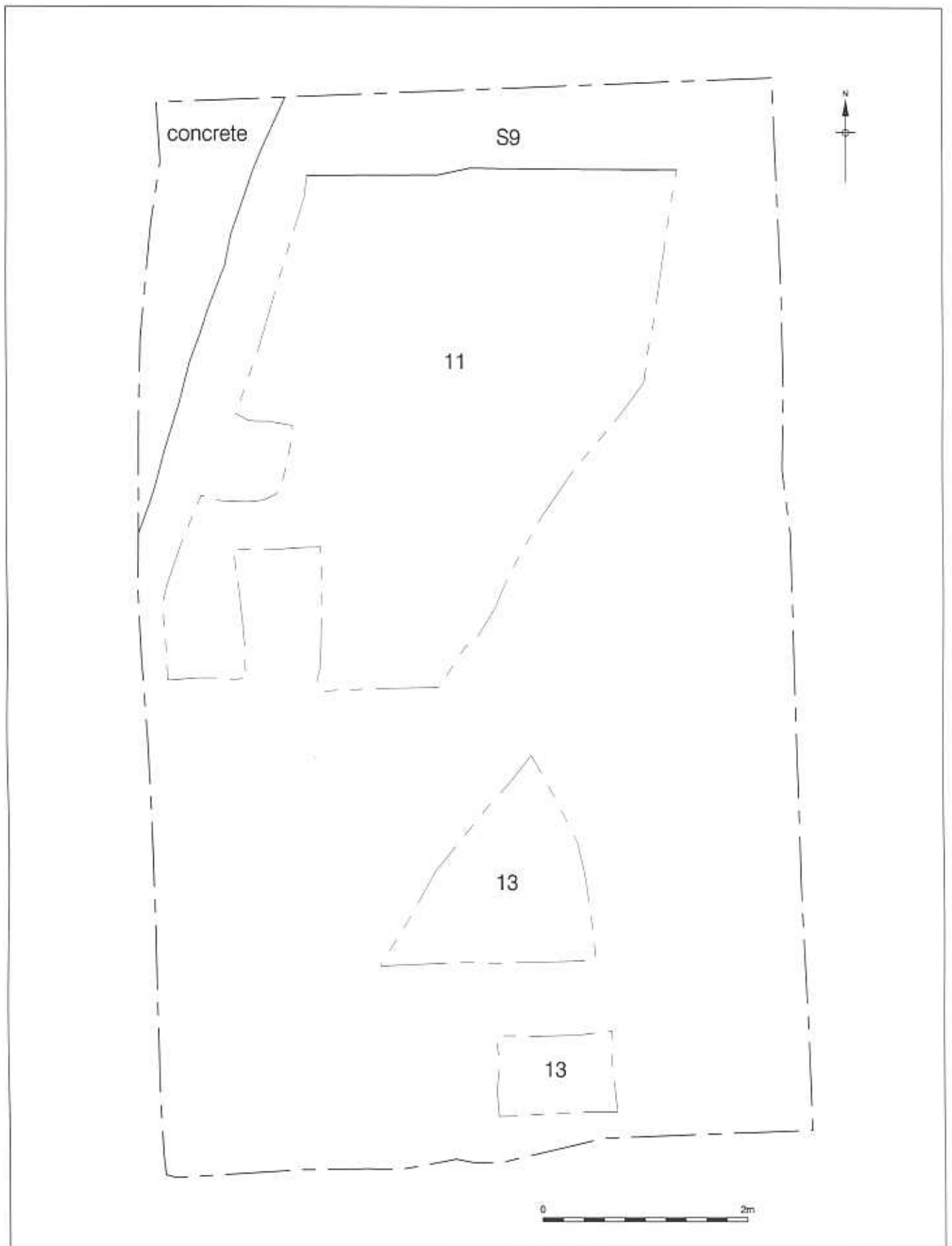


Figure 3
Plan of Area A
1:50

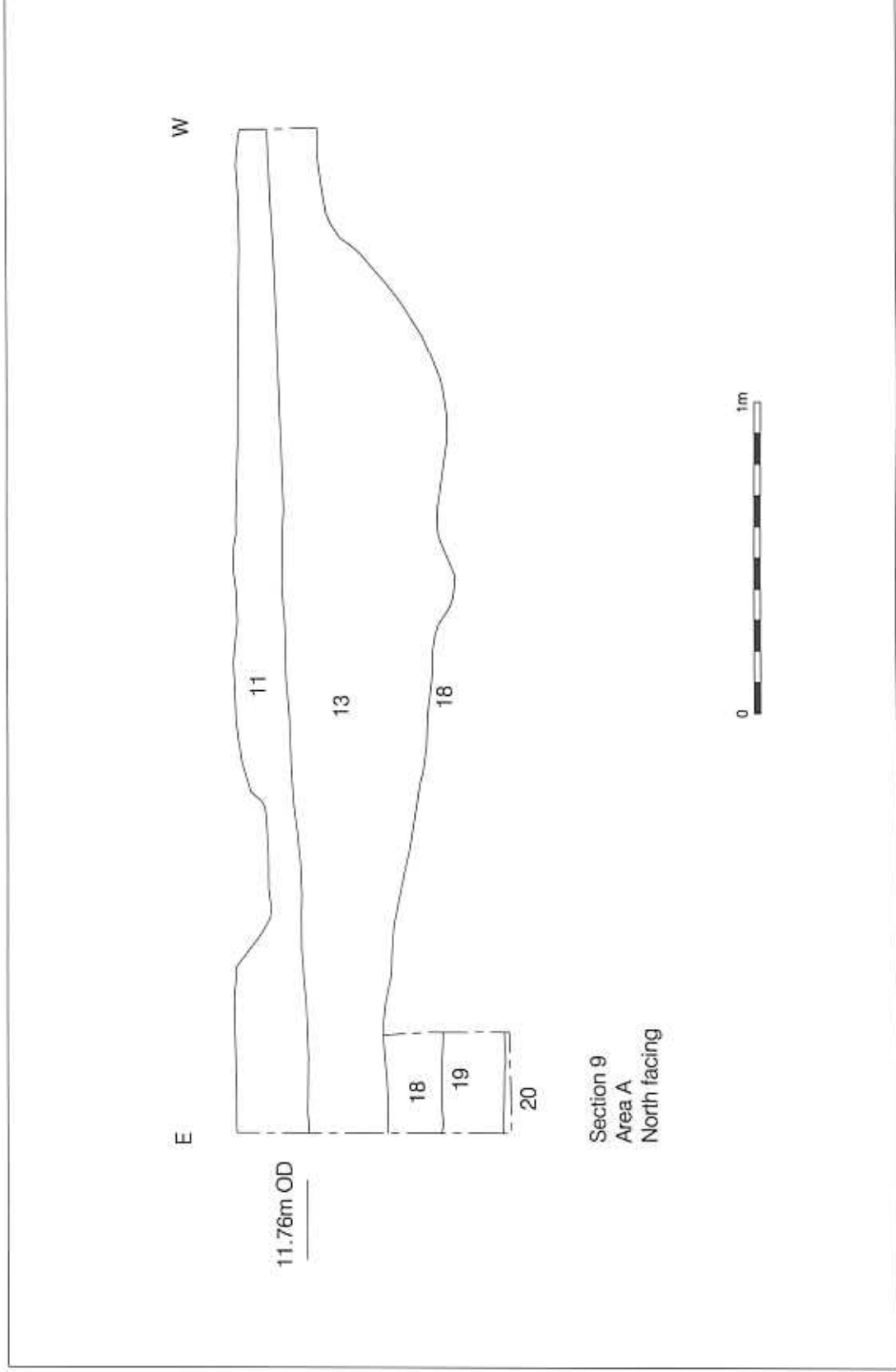


Figure 4
Section 9
1:20

7 CONCLUSIONS

- 7.1 The excavations at New Inn Broadway revealed dumped Roman deposits overlying a natural sequence of silts and sands over gravel. Limited finds evidence suggests that these layers were probably dumped during the 1st or 2nd centuries AD. Similar deposits have been found during excavations on other nearby sites (pers comm Nick Truckle).
- 7.2 No evidence for the medieval Holywell Priory was encountered during the archaeological work on the site.
- 7.3 Due to the limited significance of the archaeological finds, further post excavation work will be limited to a summary in the London Archaeologist's annual round-up of fieldwork and submission of an Oasis Historic Environment Record (Appendix 3).

8 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- 8.1 Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited would like to thank Paul Chilton of Cluttons Project and Building Consultancy, Iain Dodson and James Maxwell of Parkeray who commissioned the work on behalf of Amnesty International UK.

- 8.2 The author would like to thank Josephine Brown for the drawings, Chris Jarret and Berni Sudds for dating the artefacts and David Divers for his project management and editing. Also to Chris Pickard who initially supervised the fieldwork and Ashley Pooley and Stref Duckering for their work on site.

9 BIBLIOGRAPHY

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- Miller, P. 1999 *'St Leonard's Church, Shoreditch: an archaeological assessment'* Museum of London, Unpublished Report

APPENDIX 1: CONTEXT INDEX

(Recorded in excavation area)

Context	Type	Description	Phase
11	Layer	Stiff clay	3
13	Layer	Re-deposited gravel	2
17	Layer	Green clayey silt	1
18	Layer	Green silt-sand	1
19	Layer	Green sand-gravel	1
20	Natural	Sandy gravel	1

APPENDIX 2:

FINDS

Berni Sudds

The small group of pottery and ceramic building material recovered dates to the Roman and post-medieval period. Although the small assemblage from context [13] is consistently early Roman in date, few fragments were recovered and the small size and poor condition of the group indicate re-deposition. The small sherd of mid to late 14th to 15th century cheam ware from context [11] is also likely to be re-deposited.

The assemblage suggests that Roman and medieval activity is likely to have taken place in the vicinity but cannot date or characterise the deposits. The fabrics recovered are also well paralleled in the region. For these reasons no further work recommended.

Context	Material	Fabric	Form	Dec	No.	ED	LD	Comments	Period
11	Pottery	CHEA	-	GRGL	1	1350	1500	Very small, abraded sherd.	PMED
13	Pottery	VRW / BHWS	Flagon. ID. J. Brown	WSD	1	50	160	Small, abraded sherd. Brockley Hill White-slipped ware.	RO
13	CBM	2454	Imbrex?	-	1	50	80	Abraded. Possible frag of amphorae but surfaces missing.	RO
13	CBM	2452	Tile	-	4	55	160		RO

Table 1: Concordance of finds from NIY03.

KEY FOR CODES USED IN TABLE 1

CBM	Ceramic building material
BORDG	Surrey/ Hampshire border whiteware with green glaze
VRW/ BHWS	Verulamium Region ware/ Brockley Hill White-slipped ware
Dec	Decoration
GRGL	Green glaze
WSD	White slipped
No.	Number
ED	Earliest date
LD	Latest date
RO	Roman
PMED	Post-medieval

APPENDIX 3: HER form

OASIS ID: preconst1-4020

Project details

Project name	New Inn Yard
Short description of the project	Excavation and watching brief during the refurbishment of a early 20th century building on the site of the medieval Holywell Priory. Roman dump layers were recorded below the basement slab although no evidence of the priory survived.
Project dates	Start: 06-01-2004 End: 27-02-2004
Previous/future work	No / No
Any associated project reference codes	NIY 03 - Site code
Type of project	Recording project
Site status	Local Authority Designated Archaeological Area
Current Land use	Industry and Commerce 2 - Offices
Monument type	DUMP LAYER Roman
Investigation type	'Watching Brief','Part Excavation'
Prompt	Direction from Local Planning Authority - PPG16

Project location

Country	England
Site location	GREATER LONDON HACKNEY HACKNEY New Inn Yard
Postcode	EC2A 3EY
Study area	1000 Square metres
National grid reference	TQ 3336 8240 Point
Height OD	Min: 11.1m Max: 11.5m

Project creators

Name of Organisation	Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd
Project brief originator	Local Authority Archaeologist and/or Planning Authority/advisory body
Project design originator	Pre-Construct Archaeology
Project director/manager	David Divers
Project supervisor	Ken Bazley
Sponsor or funding body	Developer

Project archives

Physical Archive recipient	LAARC
Physical Archive Exists?	Yes
Digital Archive recipient	LAARC
Digital Archive Exists?	Yes
Paper Archive recipient	LAARC
Paper Archive Exists?	Yes

Project bibliography 1

Publication type	An unpublished document/manuscript
Title	14-20 New Inn Broadway and 17-25 New Inn Yard, Shoreditch, London Borough of Hackney
Author(s)/Editor(s)	Bazley, K.
Date	2004
Issuer or publisher	Pre-Construct Archaeology
Place of issue or publication	London
Description	Excavation and Watching Brief Report

Entered by	David Divers (ddivers@pre-construct.com)
Entered on	14 September 2004