

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

SITE CODE: BR J07

Central National Grid Reference: TQ 333821

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1. ABSTRACT

- 1.1 This report details the results and working methods of an archaeological watching brief conducted by Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd (PCA), on land at 22 to 24 Bateman's Row Shoreditch, in the London Borough of Hackney (Figure. 1).
- 1.2 The work consisted of a detailed watching brief conducted between 12th of December 2007 and 11th February 2008. Previous work carried out on the site consisted an evaluation conducted from the 13th to the 22nd August 2007, in advance of proposed redevelopment of the site.¹ The evaluation consisted of a single trench situated in the ground floor of the then extant building. The results of the evaluation are summarised below:
- 1.3 The archaeological evaluation recorded natural sandy gravel 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 were also exposed and recorded. A layer of demolition rubble, which in turn was capped with modern concrete, sealed the sequence.
- 1.5 The watching brief confirmed the presence of the medieval ditch recorded in the earlier evaluation (figure 3), which was located running in an east-west direction across the southern side of the site. No evidence of the southern edge of the ditch was located in either the watching brief or the evaluation and is therefore likely to be located outside the confines of the site boundary.
- 1.6 The remains of an early 18th century well, which was exposed during the ground reduction, was located in the far north-eastern corner of the site. The well was constructed using hand made unfrogged red bricks. This well is likely to be part of the

¹ Mulligan, D. 2007 An Archaeological Evaluation at 22-24 Bateman's Row Shoreditch, London Borough of Hackney EC2. Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd, Unpublished Report

same phase of activity as a robber trench and fragmentary remains of a wall
foundation at the southern end of the site

2. INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 This document details the results and working methods of archaeological investigations conducted at 22 to 24 Bateman's Row Shoreditch, in the London Borough of Hackney. (Figure 1)
- 2.2 The site is bounded by a residential property to the north, a private car park to the east with Bateman's Row to the south and French Place to the west. A two-storey building, which previously existed on the site, has now been demolished.
- 2.3 The investigations consisted of an archaeological evaluation conducted from the 13th to the 22nd August 2007, and a detailed watching brief conducted from the 12th of December 2007 to the 11th February 2008. Theis and Khan Architects commissioned the work in advance of proposed redevelopment of the site.
- 2.4 The work was undertaken following a method statement prepared by Tim Bradley and approved by English Heritage (GLAAS) on behalf of the London Borough of Hackney.²
- 2.5 Contractors E.S.C carried out the groundworks and the principle contractors on site were Silver Interiors.
- 2.6 The site is centred on the national grid reference TQ333 821. Temporary benchmarks were transferred from the Ordnance Survey Bench Mark located at French Place and gave a site value of 14.98mOD.
- 2.7 The completed archive comprising written, drawn and photographic records and artefactual material will be deposited at the Museum of London under the Site Code BRJ07.

² Method Statement for an Archaeological Watching Brief at 22-24 Bateman's Row, Shoreditch, London Borough of Hackney, EC2. Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd. Unpublished Report

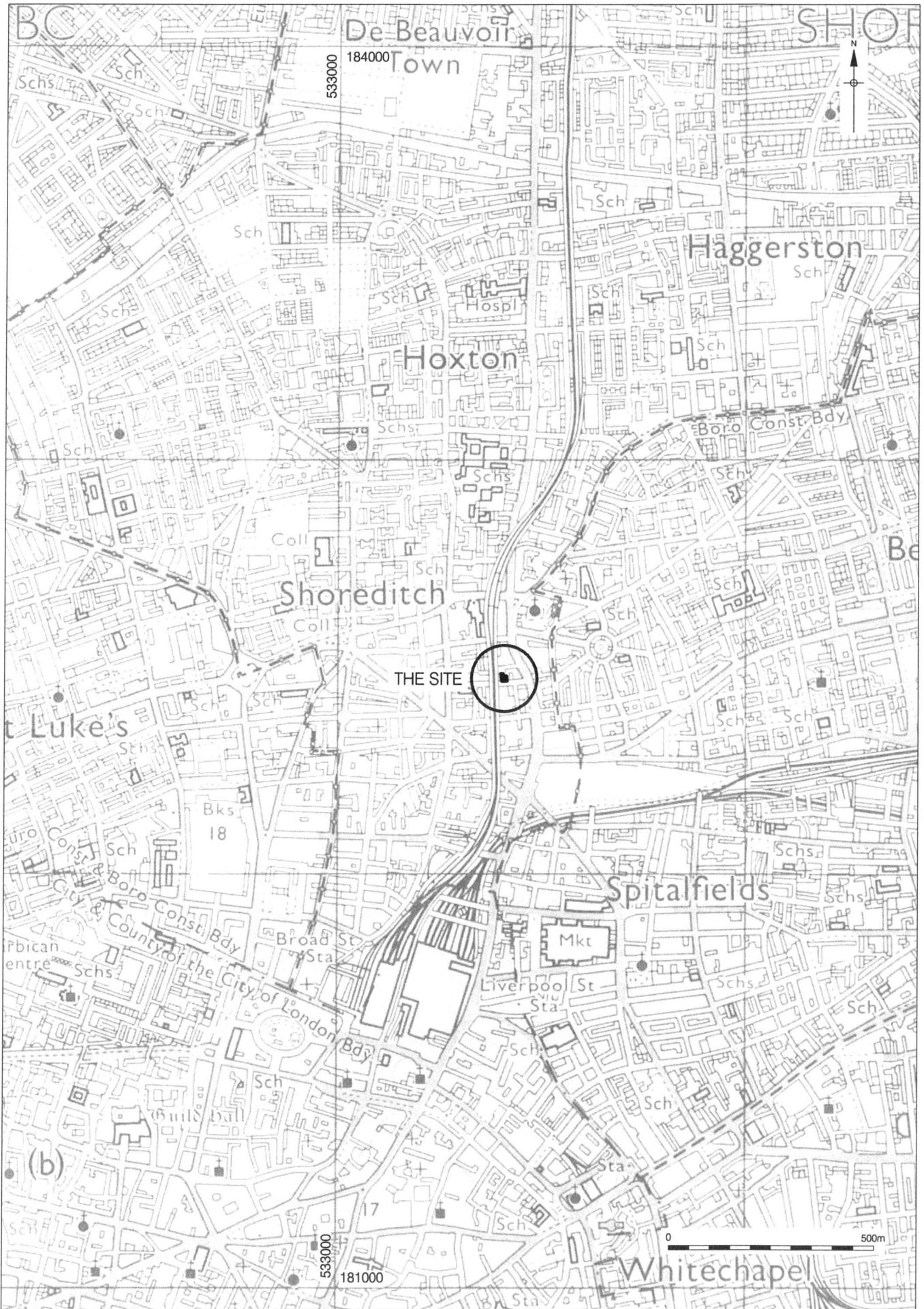


Figure 1
Site Location
1:12,500 at A4

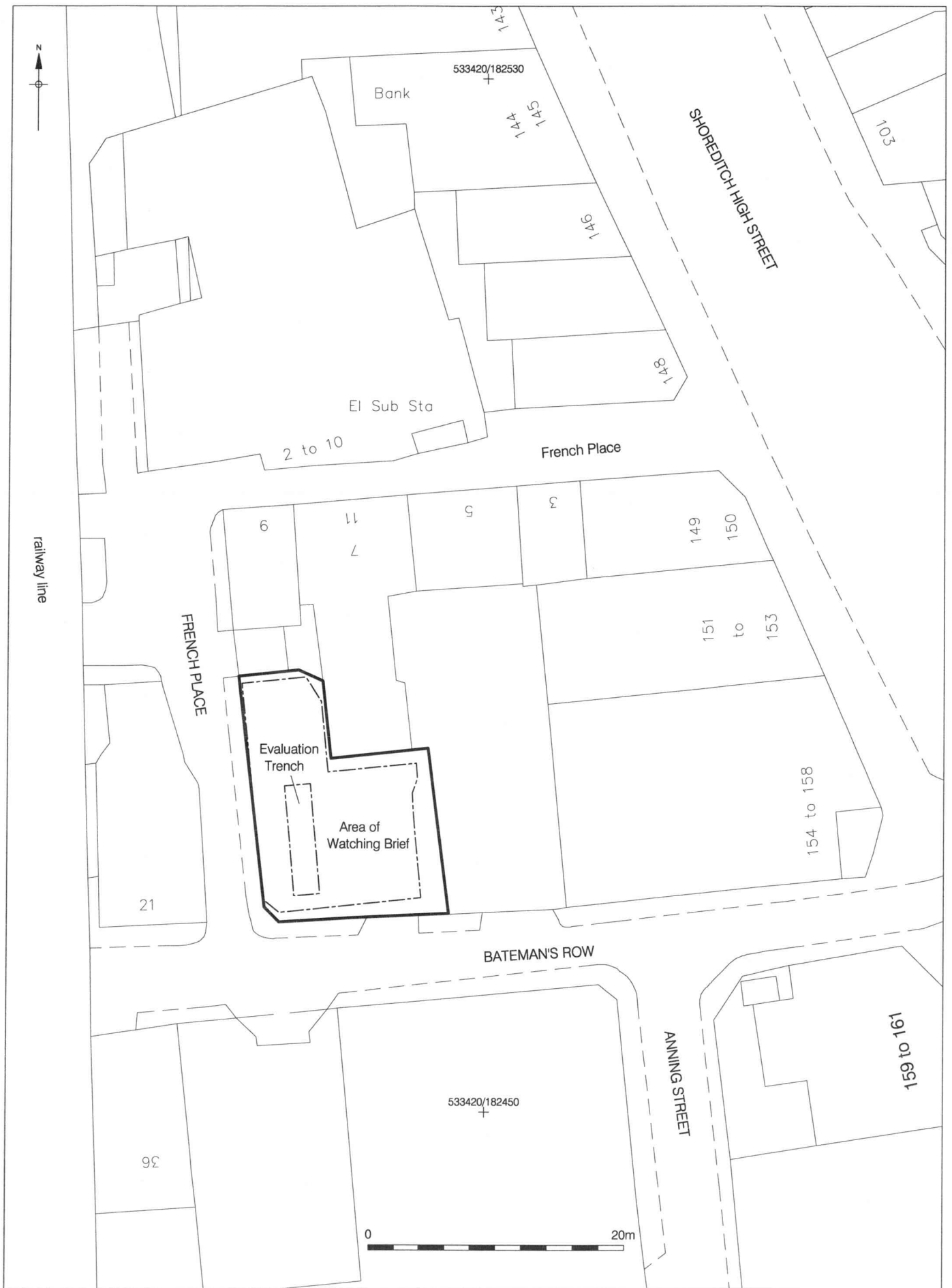


Figure 2
Trench location
1:400 at A4

3 GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY

3.1 Geology

- 3.1.1 The underlying geology of the 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, which ran approximately 200m to the southwest of the site. Natural terrace gravel was observed and recorded at a depth of 12.37m OD at the northern end of the evaluation trench. During the watching brief element of work the terrace gravels were observed at a general depth of c.11.10m OD.

3.2 Topography

- 3.2.1 The site is bounded to the north by residential housing, to the east by a private car park and to the south by Bateman Row and to the west by French Place.
- 3.2.2 The building, which previously occupied the site, has been demolished and the site was flat and even at the time of the watching brief. The ground floor and outside car park is covered with a concrete slab which at a level of 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.³ 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.

³ Clough, H. 2003 Archaeological Desk Based Assessment at New Inn Yard, Shoreditch. Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd, Unpublished Report

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 aisle 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 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 and 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 ARCHAEOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY

- 5.1 The investigations at Bateman's Row, Shoreditch consisted of a primary evaluation conducted in 2007 and follow-up watching brief on the development groundworks conducted in 2007 / 2008. The methodology outlined below relates to the mitigation watching brief elements of fieldwork.
- 5.2 The removal of ground level surfaces and obstructions was undertaken by E.S.C using a 360° tracked mechanical excavator under the observation of the attendant archaeologist. Following the removal of the uppermost deposits (concrete and hardcore) the machine was fitted with a flat bladed ditching bucket. Areas of investigation were reduced in 200mm spits under archaeological supervision until the uppermost archaeological horizon or natural horizons were reached.
- 5.3 Following machining, and where safe to enter, all faces of the excavation areas that required examination were cleaned using appropriate hand tools. All investigation of archaeological deposits was by hand, with cleaning, examination and recording both in plan and section.
- 5.4 Recording was undertaken using the single context recording system as specified in the Museum of London Site Manual. Plans were drawn at a scale of 1:20, and full or representative sections at a scale of 1:10. Contexts were numbered sequentially and recorded on *pro-forma* context sheets.
- 5.5 Areas of the excavation were fenced off during the works and were backfilled by E.S.C on completion of each phase of the archaeological investigation.

6 ARCHAEOLOGICAL PHASE DISCUSSION

6.1 Phase 1 Natural

6.1.1 Natural gravels [62], [63] was observed and recorded at a depth of 11.06m OD across the study site and were sealed by [57], a grey clay-silt at a depth of 12.48m OD.

6.2 Phase 2 – Medieval

6.2.1 Truncating deposit [57] towards the south of the site was an east-west ditch cut [64] which had four fills [58], [59], [60], [61], recorded at a highest level of 12.57m OD.

6.2.2 The primary fill [61] consisted of was a very organic silt. Sealing the primary fill was clay-silt with frequent flint gravel [60]. Finds recovered during the evaluation from a similar fill [41], included peg tile and sherds of pottery. The pottery recovered from this fill is a medieval coarse sandy-ware with a date range from 1140 AD to 1300 AD. No finds were recovered during the watching brief from these deposits as the depth of the trenches and health and safety implications precluded safe entry into the excavation area.

6.2.3 The northern edge of the ditch was recorded extending east-west across the entire site length of the site (13m), whilst the southern edge was not identified, suggesting that the ditch was in excess of 8m in width. During the evaluation trenching the ditch was recorded as being 1.45m in depth at its northern end. The excavations associated with the new development did not necessitate further excavation over the area of the ditch, so additional information on the depth and stratigraphic sequence within the ditch was not recorded.

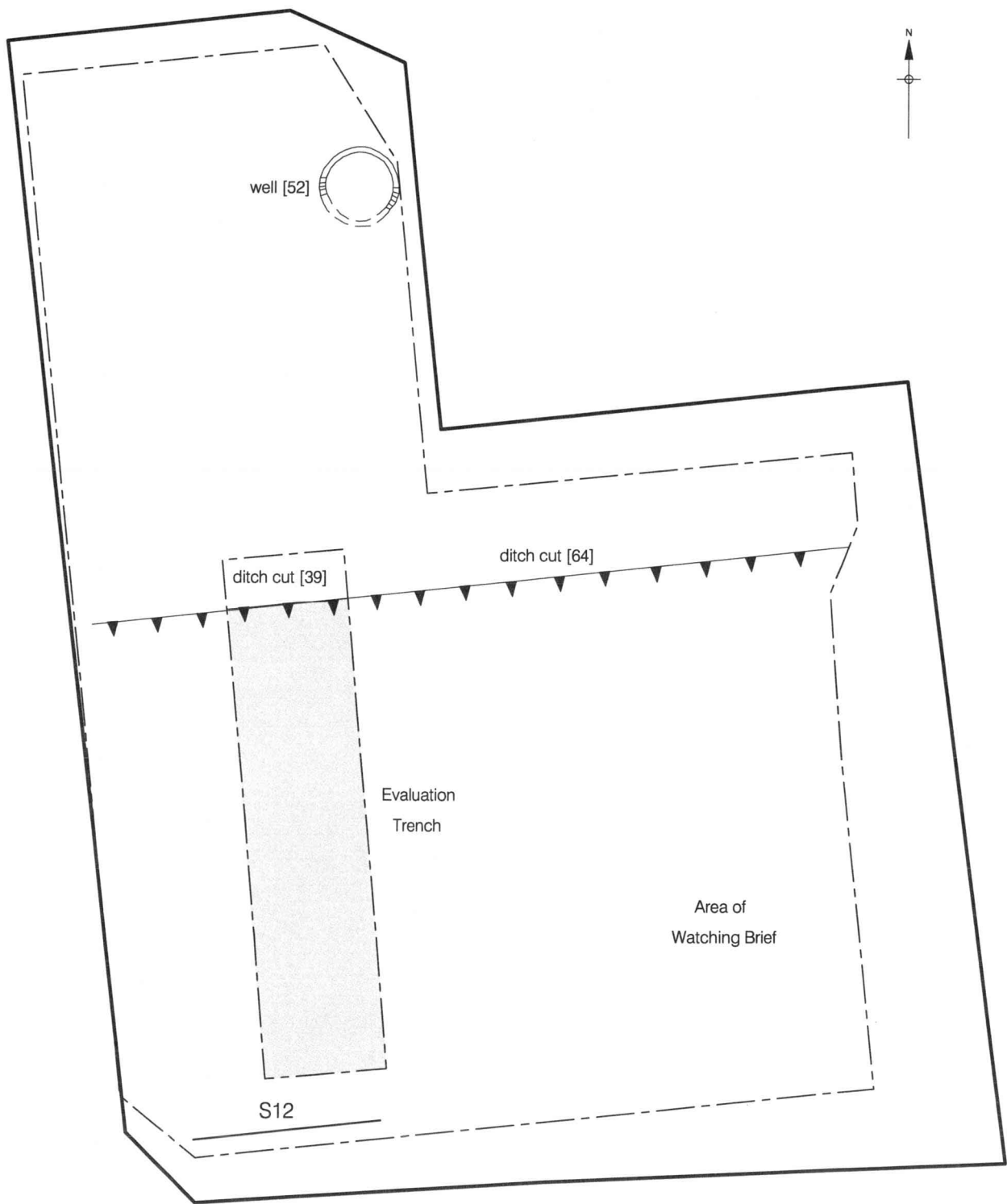
6.2.4 Sealing the ditch fills was a thin dark brown layer with frequent flecks of charcoal [56] which was horizontally truncated by modern pile foundations at a depth of 12.58m OD. This deposit was recorded as [37] within the evaluation trench, where it was found to be 0.34m thick, with an untruncated height of 12.91m OD.

6.3 Phase 3 - Post-Medieval

6.3.1 The earliest post medieval deposits was very dark brown sandy silt [51], identified in the far north of the study site, which was approximately 0.50m thick with a highest

level 13.60m OD. This layer is similar to [34] seen during the evaluation and may have been part of a programme of land reclamation.

- 6.3.2 A well [52] was recorded truncating layer [51] in the far north east corner of the site (figure 3). The well was made from hand made red brick and was dated from pottery to the late 17th early 18th century. This well might have an association with a north-south robber trench [22] recorded during the evaluation, which may have formed part of an external wall or property boundary in the 18th century. This would place the well to the rear of that property.
- 6.3.3 The top of the well was truncated by a concrete ground beam, which ran in an east-west direction and was part of the building that was demolished on site to make way for the redevelopment. The top of the well was recorded at a height of 13.94mOD and the lowest level of the well recorded at 12.54mOD.
- 6.3.4 The fragmentary remains of a 18th century wall [69] were also located to the south of the site in Section 12 (figure 5). The wall was constructed using red hand made unfrosted bricks and is likely to date to the 18th century. The wall, which ran in an east-west direction, was truncated to the east and the west by pile pad foundations belonging to the building that occupied the site prior to the redevelopment. The remains of this wall may also be part of an earlier property mentioned above in paragraph (7.3.2) and therefore be associated with north-south robber trench [22] recorded during the evaluation.
- 6.3.5 The truncated highest level for the wall [69] was recorded at 13.70m OD, whilst the highest level for robber cut [22] was 13.57m OD. This wall, along with the well [52] and the robber cut [22], represent the earliest structures recorded in the area of the site following the backfilling of the medieval ditch.
- 6.3.6 A 19th century north-south orientated wall [70] was recorded at a highest level of 14.73 m OD along the extreme eastern side of the site. The wall had one east-west return [71] at the northern end and is interpreted as forming part of the eastern property boundary wall. This was sealed with a concrete floor slab at a level of 14.98mOD.



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Figure 3
Plan of Evaluation and Watching Brief features
1:100 at A4

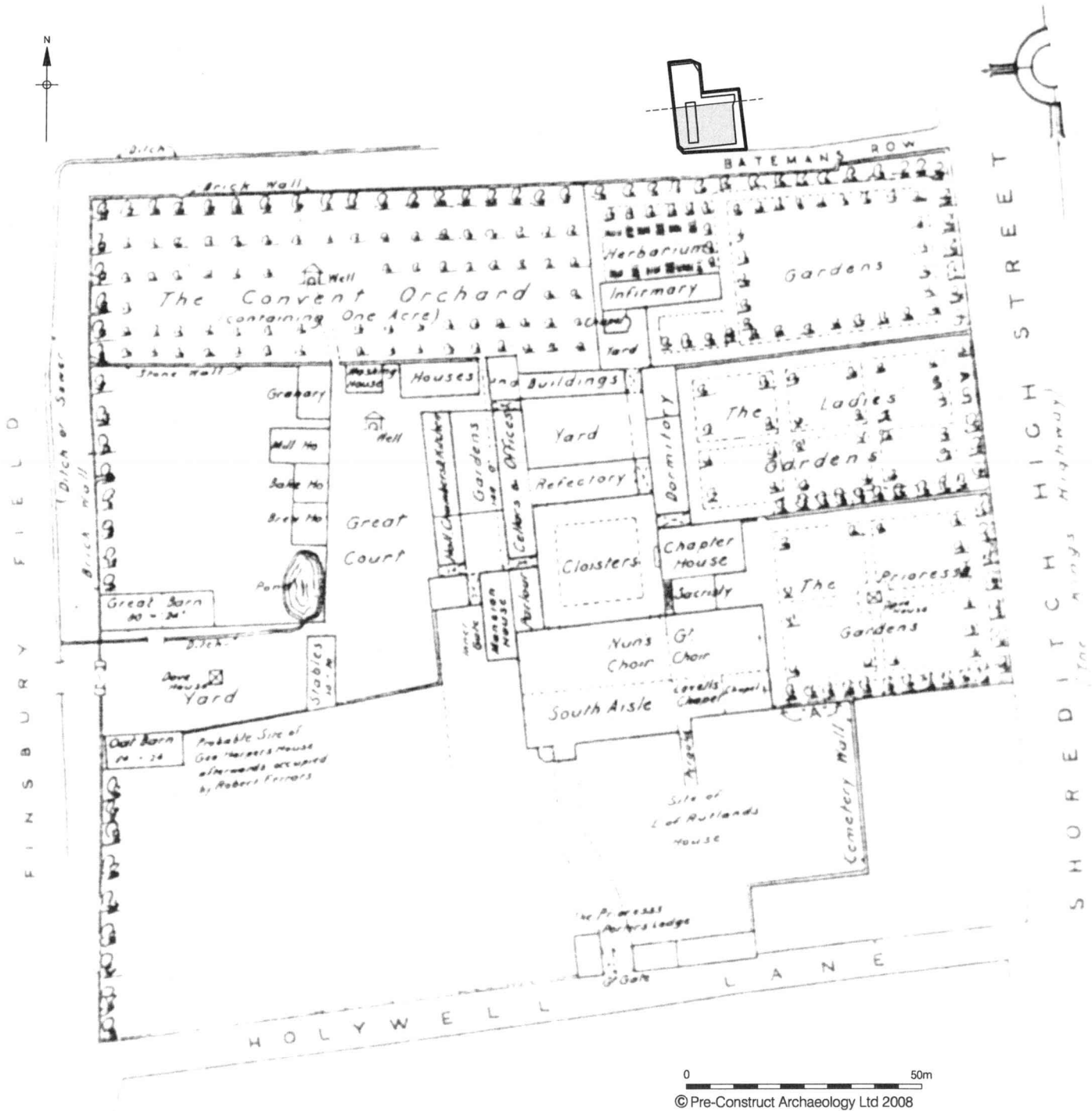
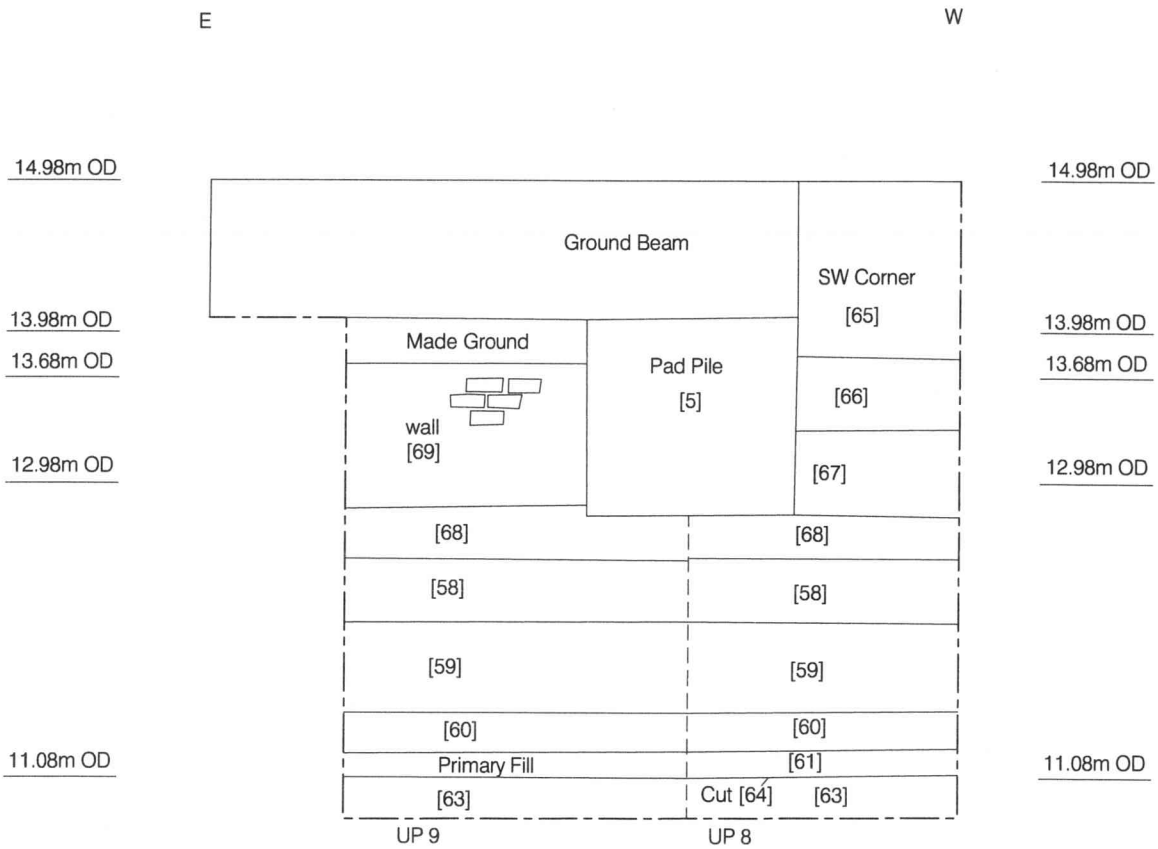


Figure 4
 1927 representation of 1540 Priory
 showing location of site and excavated ditch
 1:1250 at A4



Section S12
North Facing



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Figure 5
Section 12
1:50 at A4

7 CONCLUSIONS

- 7.1 The watching brief conducted on land at 22 to 24 Bateman's Row Shoreditch has augmented the archaeological evidence recorded during the evaluation. The watching brief revealed the natural gravel and clay silt was cut by a large east-west ditch located across the southern side of the site. The top of the ditch was recorded at a level of 12.48mOD. This cut is the same as cut [39] recorded during the evaluation and interpreted as the ditch demarcating the northern boundary of Holywell Priory.
- 7.2 The dating evidence from the primary ditch fill recovered during evaluation included medieval tile and pottery sherds dated 1140 to 1300AD. These dates coincide with the period the Priory was founded and still in use. No additional dating evidence was recovered from the ditch during the watching brief, as it was not possible to enter most of the trenches due to health and safety restrictions.
- 7.3 The ditch cut was clearly seen running east-west across the entire width of the site with similar upper fills to those recorded during the earlier evaluation (Figure 2). The southern side of the ditch was not exposed during the watching brief and this suggests that the southern edge lies outside the confines of the site, and is therefore in excess of 8.00m in width in the immediate vicinity of the site. The restricted depth of the development excavations precluded further investigation of the base of the ditch, which had previously been identified as being 1.45m at the extreme northern end of the evaluation trench.
- 7.4 Later evidence recorded in the area of the site included a series of ground reclamation deposits laid down following the infilling of the ditch. The earliest structural remains recorded in the area of the site appear to date to the late 17th/18th century, in the form of a robber trench and fragmentary remains of a wall foundation at the southern end of the site, and a well situated further to the north. Previous investigations in the area have recorded 18th century basements and cesspits indicative of the development of slums in the area during this period, and the remains located in the area of the site provide further evidence of this development.
- 7.5 The latest evidence recorded on the site relates to 19th century development and later modifications to the buildings recently demolished in advance of the redevelopment of the site.

8 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Pre-construct would like to thank Architects Theis and Khan Architects for commissioning the work, and contractors Silver Interiors and ESC.

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

Thanks are also extended to David Divers, English Heritage (GLAAS) for monitoring the fieldwork.

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APPENDIX 1: CONTEXT INDEX

Site Code	Context No.	Trench	Section / Elevation	Type	Description	Level
BRJ07	50	N/E Corner	Section 10	Layer	Sandy silt	14.78mOD
BRJ07	51	N/E Corner	Section 10	Layer	Sandy silt	13.94mOD
BRJ07	52	N/E Corner	Section 10	Masonry	Well	13.94mOD
BRJ07	53	N/E Corner	Section 10	Fill	Backfill of well	12.82mOD
BRJ07	54	Wester side	Section 11	Layer	Sandy silt	
BRJ07	55	Wester side	Section 11	Layer	Agricultural soil	13.82mOD
BRJ07	56	Between pile 2/3	Section 11	Layer	Lens Charcoal	12.58mOD
BRJ07	57	Between pile 2/3		Layer	Natural Clay Silt	
BRJ07	58	Between pile 2/3	Section 11	Fill	Fill of cut [64]	12.48mOD
BRJ07	59	Between pile 2/3	Section 11	Fill	Fill of cut [64]	12.08mOD
BRJ07	60	Between pile 2/3	Section 11	Fill	Fill of cut [64]	11.48mOD
BRJ07	61	Between pile 2/3	Section 11	Fill	Primary fill	11.22mOD
BRJ07	62	Pile 2	Section 11	Layer	Natural Gravel	11.06mOD
BRJ07	63	Pile 2	Section 14	Layer	Natural sand	11.03mOD
BRJ07	64	Pile 2/3	Section 11	Cut	Ditch	12.48MOD
BRJ07	65	Underpin 8		Layer	Natural Clay Silt	
BRJ07	66	Underpin 8		Layer	Layer freq mortor	
BRJ07	67	Underpin 8		Layer	Agricultural soil	
BRJ07	68	Underpin 8		Layer	Sandy Silt	
BRJ07	69	Underpin 9		Masonry	E/W Brick Wall	
BRJ07	70	Eastern L.O.E	Section 14	Masonry	N/S Wall	14.73mOD
BRJ07	71	Western L.O.E	Section 14	Masonry	E/W Brick Wall	14.73mOD

APPENDIX 2: OASIS DATA COLLECTION FORM

OASIS ID: preconst1-45911

Project details

Project name	An Archaeological Watching Brief at 22-24 Bateman's Row Shoreditch, London Borough of Hackney EC2
Short description of the project	The watching brief confirmed the presence of the medieval ditch recorded in the earlier evaluation, which was located running in an east west direction across the southern side of the site. No evidence of the southern edge was located in either the watching brief or the evaluation and is therefore likely to be located outside the confines of the site boundary. The remains of an early 18th century well, which was exposed during the ground reduction, was located in the far north-eastern corner of the site. The well was constructed using hand made unfrosted red bricks. This well is likely to be part of the same phase of activity as a robber trench and fragmentary remains of a wall foundation at the southern end of the site.
Project dates	Start: 12-12-2007 End: 11-02-2008
Previous/future work	Yes / No
Type of project	Recording project
Site status	Area of Archaeological Importance (AAI)
Current Land use	Industry and Commerce 2 - Offices
Monument type	DITCH Medieval
Monument type	WALL FOUNDATION Post Medieval
Monument type	WELL Post Medieval
Significant Finds	POTTERY Medieval
Significant Finds	POTTERY Post Medieval
Significant Finds	BUILDING MATERIAL Medieval
Significant Finds	BUILDING MATERIAL Post Medieval

Project location

Country England
Site location GREATER LONDON HACKNEY HACKNEY 22-24 Bateman's Row,
Shoreditch, London Borough of Hackney, EC2

Postcode EC2

Study area 260.00 Square metres

Site coordinates TQ 333 821 51.5215685487 -0.07842952664550 51 31 17 N 000 04
42 W Point

Height OD Min: 11.10m Max: 12.37m

Project creators

Name of Organisation Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd

Project brief originator GLAAS

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 & Khan Architects

Project archives

Physical Archive LAARC

recipient

Physical Contents 'Ceramics'

Digital Archive recipient LAARC

Digital Media available 'Spreadsheets','Text'

Paper Archive recipient LAARC

Paper Contents 'Stratigraphic','Survey'

Paper Media available 'Matrices','Photograph','Plan','Report','Section'

Entered by Tim Bradley (tbradley@pre-construct.com)

Entered on 23 July 2008