DOCUMENT VERIFICATION

ARCHAEOLOGICAL BUILDING RECORDING OF 15 DOCK STREET, LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS

Quality Control

Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited			
	Name & Title	Signature	Date
Text Prepared by:	James Dixon		November 2005
Graphics Prepared by:	Josephine Brown		November 2005
Graphics Checked by:	Peter Moore	Peter Moore	November 2005
Project Manager Sign-off:	Peter Moore	Peter Moore	November 2005

Revision No.	Date	Checked	Approved

Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd
Unit 54
Brockley Cross Business Centre
96 Endwell Road
London
SE4 2PD

ARCHAEOLOGICAL BUILDING RECORDING OF 15 DOCK STREET, LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS, E1

SITE CODE: DOK05

COMMISSIONING CLIENT: STERLING PARTNERS

WRITTEN AND RESEARCHED BY: JAMES DIXON
NOVEMBER 2005

PROJECT MANAGER: KEN SABEL

CONTRACTOR:

Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited
Unit 54
Brockley Cross Business Centre
96 Endwell Road
Brockley
London SE4 2PD

Tel: 0207 732 3925
Fax: 0207 732 7896
Email: jdixon@pre-construct.com

November 2005

CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

LIST OF PLATES

1 NON TECHNICAL SUMMARY

1.1 Sterling Partners are proposing a site redevelopment at 15 Dock Street, London Borough of Tower Hamlets, E1. The site is located at TQ 3418 8072.

1.2 The report presents the results of a phase of historic building recording, following the recommendations of the Desktop Assessment carried out by Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited[1]. The results of the initial assessment of the site have been incorporated into this report. A summary of historic maps of the site is included as Figures 3-6.

1.3 The building at 15 Dock Street first appears on the 1873 25 inch Ordnance Survey map and is likely to date to between the 1840s and early 1870s. It is locally listed.

1.4 Surviving mouldings were recorded and a brief photographic survey and fabric analysis were undertaken. Recording of roof trusses was not possible due to a lack of safe access.

1.5 No further recommendations have arisen from this phase of the project.

[1] Taylor J and Sabel K 2004 *An Archaeological Desktop Assessment of Land at 15 Dock Street, London Borough of Tower Hamlets, E1* Pre-Construct Archaeology

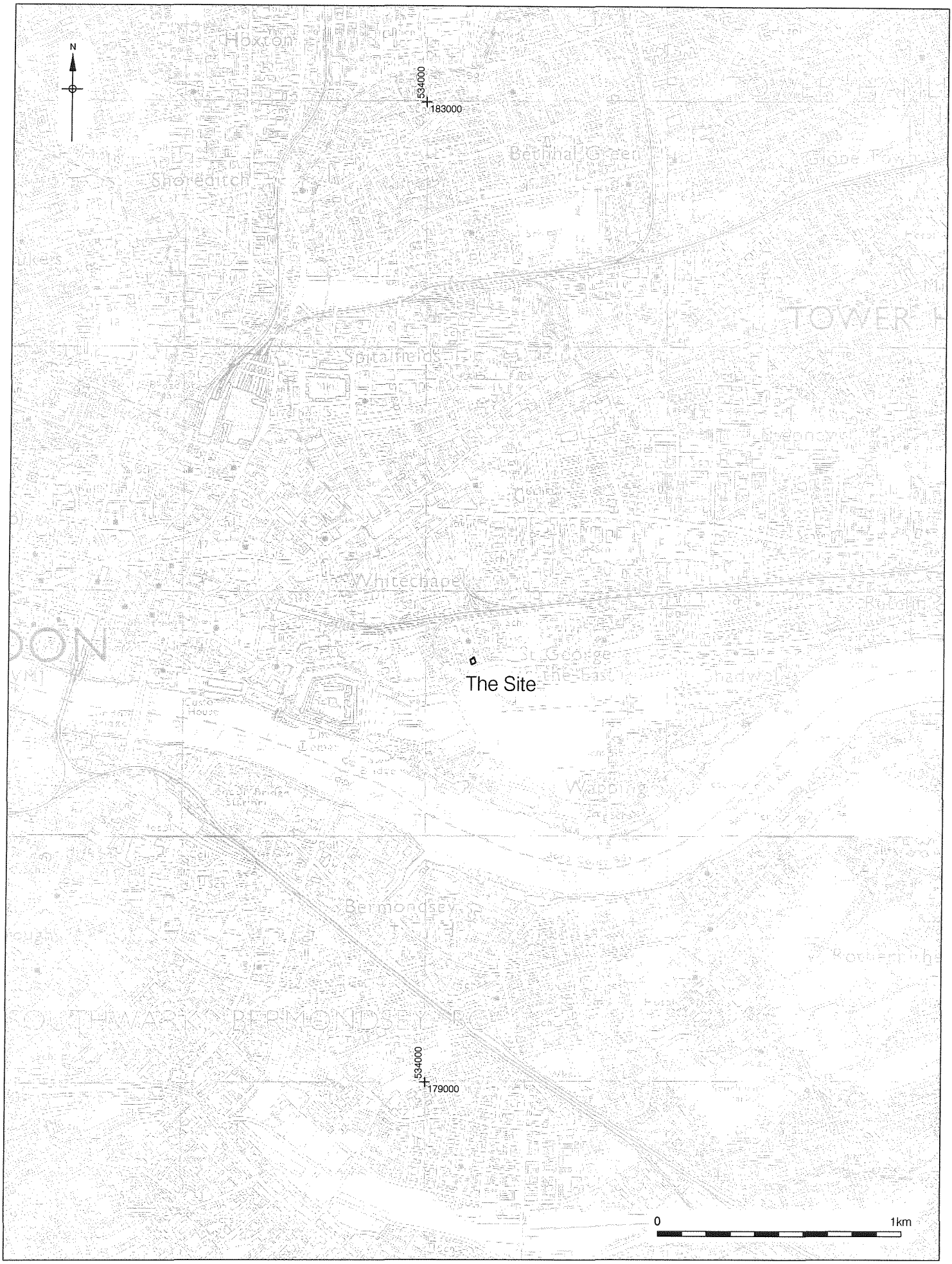
2 INTRODUCTION

2.1 Work on site has been commissioned by Sterling Partners in advance of a proposed development at 15 Dock Street, London Borough of Tower Hamlets, E1 (Fig 1).

2.2 This report presents the results of a phase of Archaeological Building Recording following the recommendations of the Desktop Assessment produced by Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited in fulfilment of the above commission and incorporates the results of the initial building assessment carried out by Pre-Construct Archaeology. The series of historic maps appears as Figures 3-6.

2.3 The building recording forms part of a wider programme of archaeological work that included a watching brief and excavation during ground reduction to the rear of the building, undertaken as part of the same redevelopment of the site.

2.4 The Archaeological Building Recording was aimed at recording surviving elements of the building on the site prior to their removal as part of the site's development, and at completing a brief photographic survey and fabric analysis of the same building.



Reproduced from Ordnance Survey 1:25,000. Crown Copyright 1987

Figure 1
Site Location
1:20,000

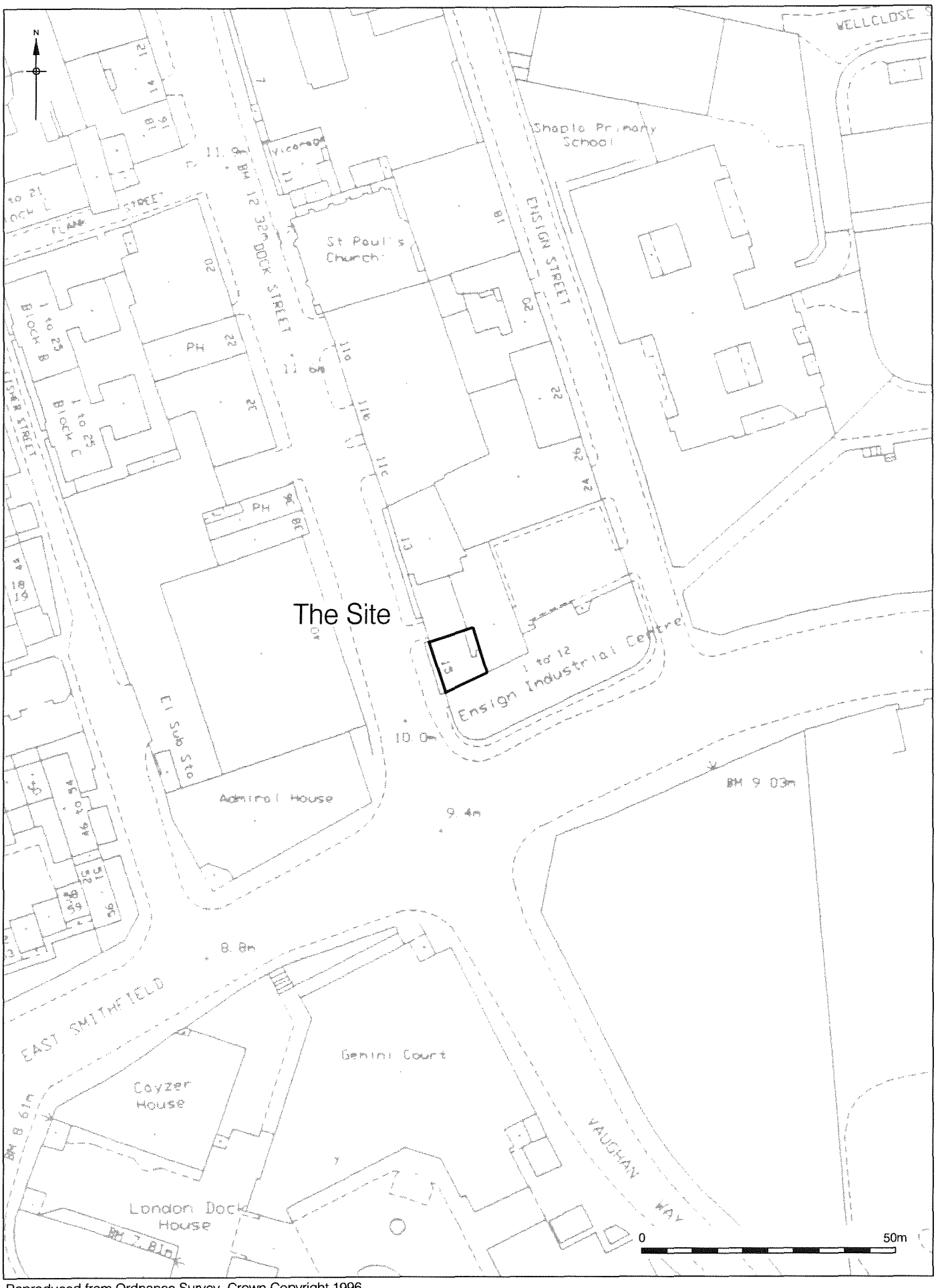


Figure 2
Detailed Site Location
1:1000

3 METHOD

3.1 General

3.1.1 The Archaeological Building Recording at 15 Dock Street, London Borough of Tower Hamlets, E1 was aimed at recording surviving mouldings prior to alteration as part of the proposed development, and at producing a photographic survey and brief fabric analysis of the building.

3.2 Assessment

3.2.1 Fieldwork on the site was carried out by the author on 6/1/2005, based upon the recommendations of the previous work on the site.

3.3 Recording

3.3.1 Surviving mouldings within the building were recorded in profile at a scale of 1:1. These are presented in this report as Appendix One.

3.4 Photography

3.4.1 The interior and elements of the exterior of the building were recorded photographically in 35mm format in both black and white and colour.

3.5 Fabric Analysis

3.5.1 A general fabric analysis of the building at 15 Dock Street was included in the initial Desktop Assessment. Elements of the building fabric uncovered by work on the site since the initial assessment were recorded by written description.

3.6 Site Archive

3.6.1 The drawings and photographs produced by the Archaeological Building Recording will be added to the site archive upon completion of the project. The building recording archive will form part of the archaeological archive for the project and will be submitted to the London Archaeological Archive Resource Centre (LAARC) under the site-code DOK05. The report will also be added to the National Monuments Record (NMR).

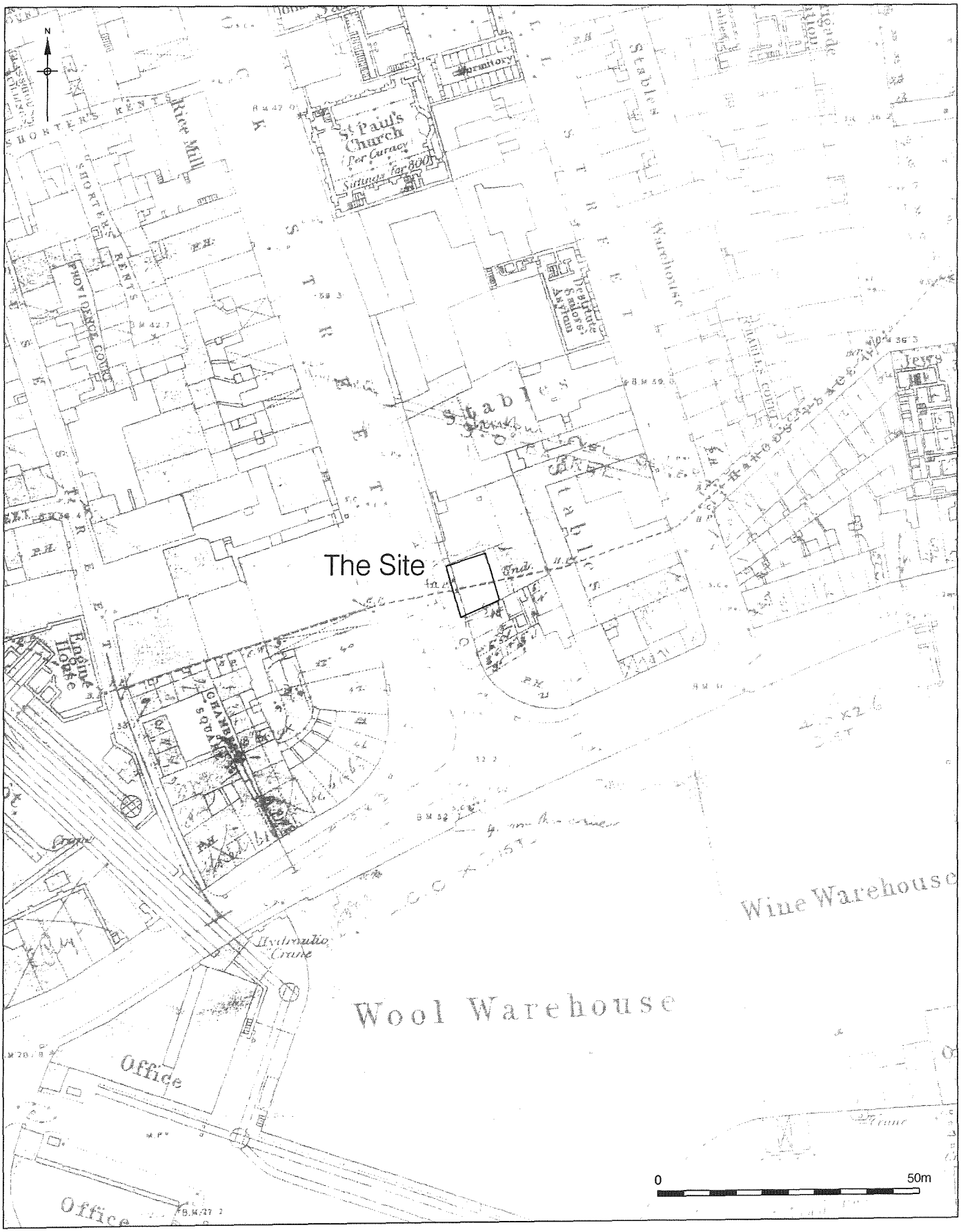


Figure 3
Ordnance Survey 1873
1:1000

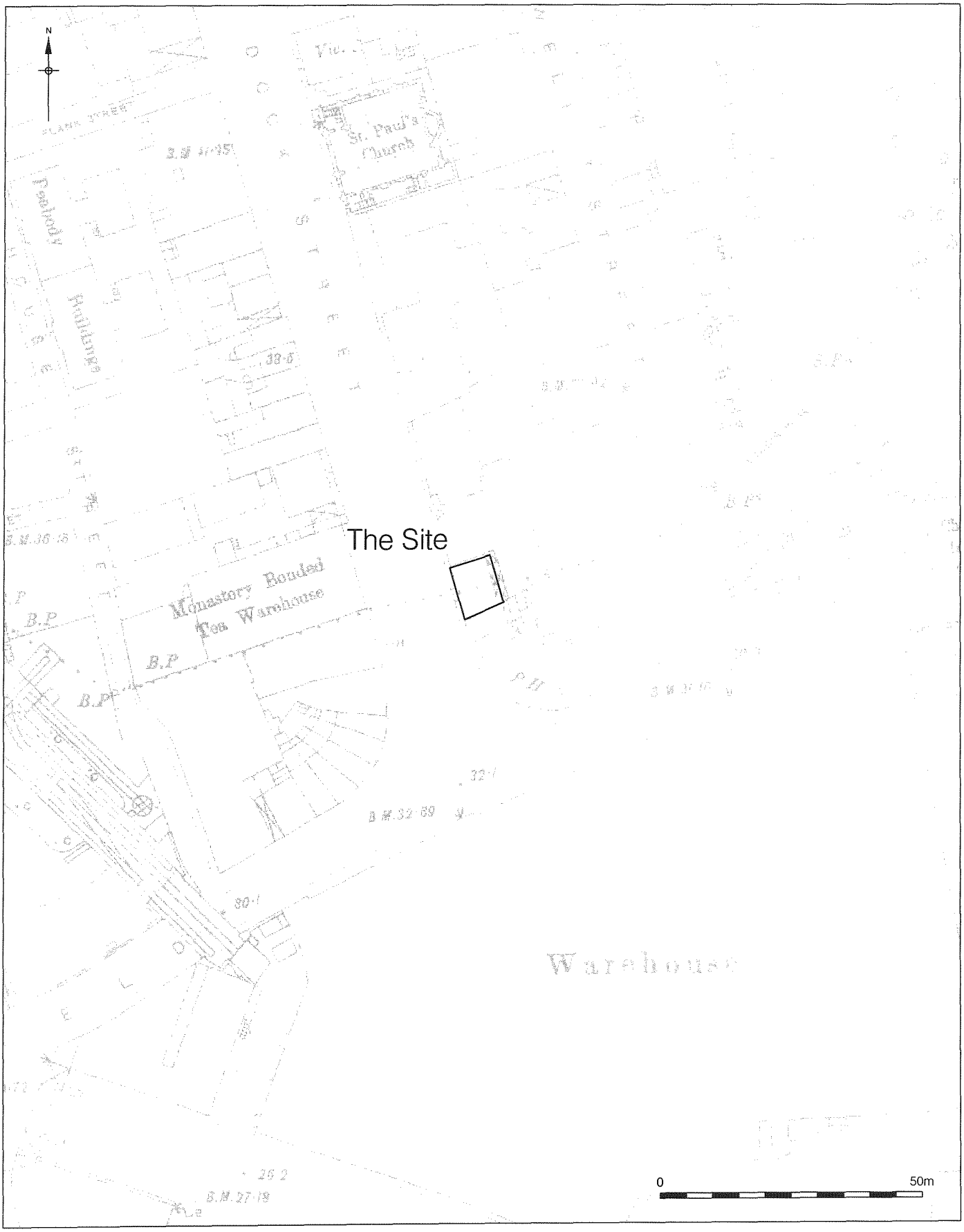


Figure 4
Ordnance Survey 1921
1:1000

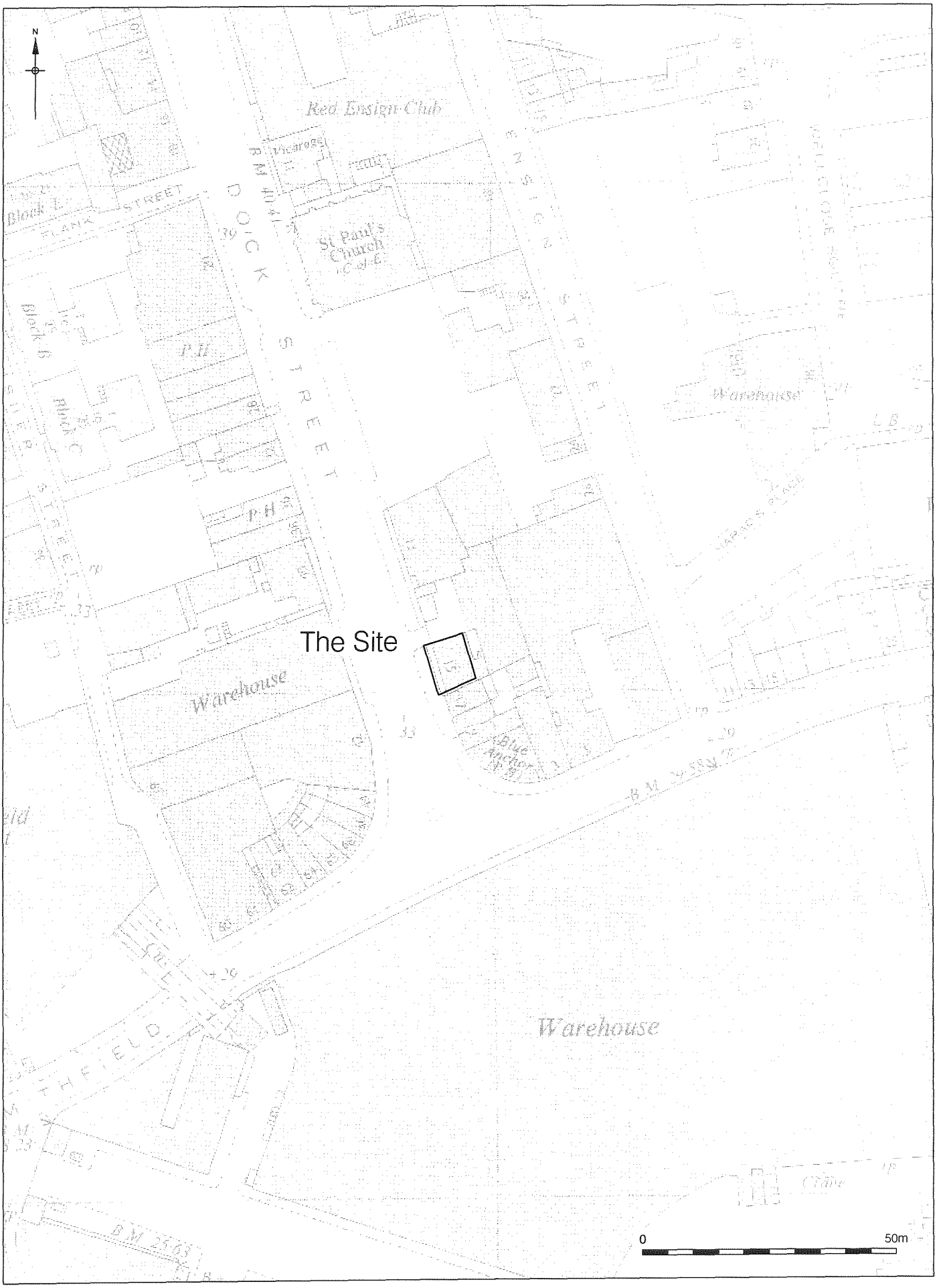


Figure 5
Ordnance Survey 1963
1:1000

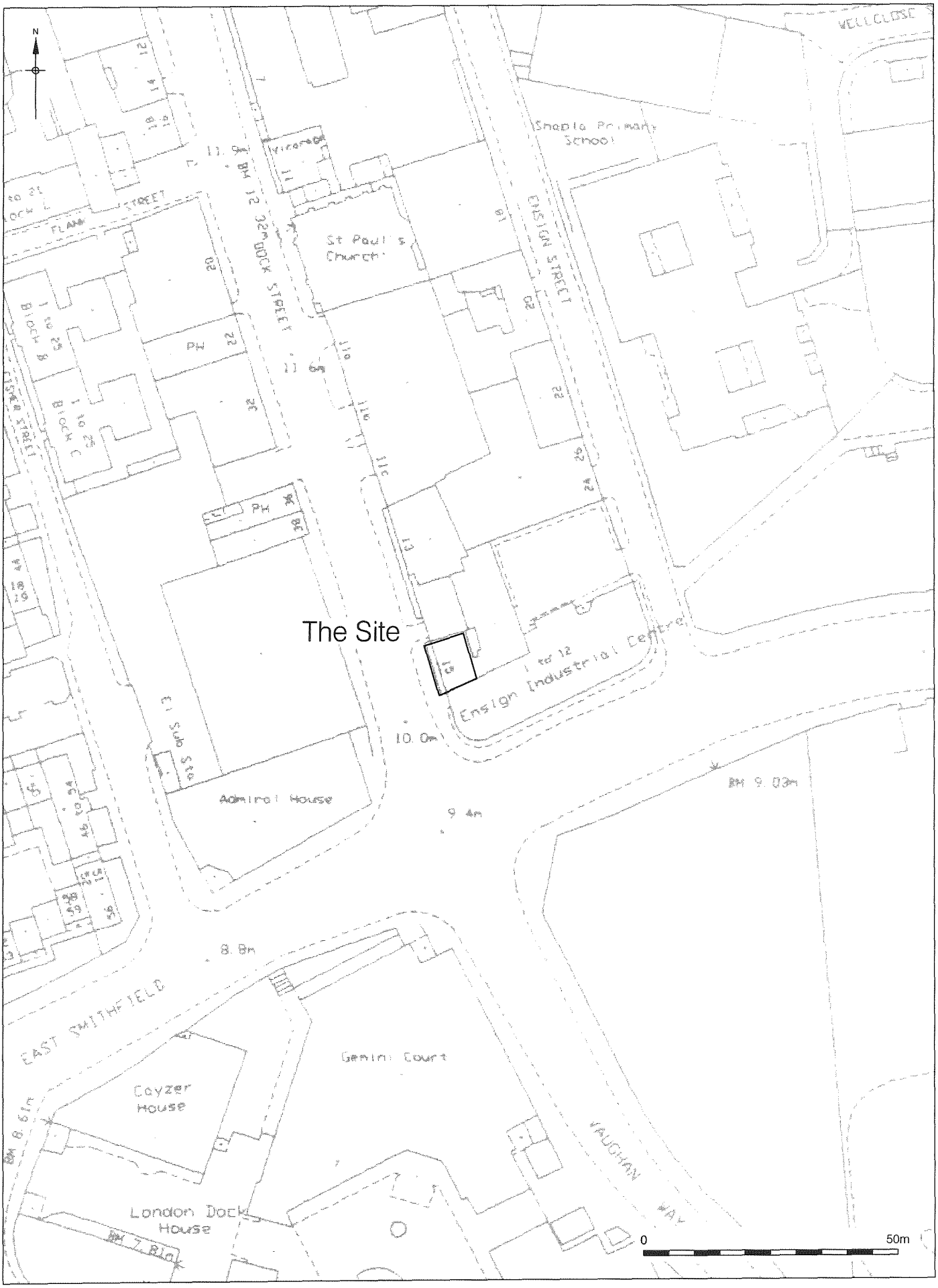


Figure 6
Ordnance Survey 1996
1:1000

4 BUILDING RECORDING

4.1 15 Dock Street has three storeys in addition to the basement. The building is rectangular on plan with a slightly angled south wall. It is flat fronted and three bays wide, fronting the street, with a central front door to the slightly raised ground floor. There were originally two rooms to each floor, with a smaller rear room in the northeast corner of the house. The northwest corner houses the staircase.

Plate 1: 15 Dock Street from the south

4.2 Fabric Analysis

4.2.1 The following represents the fabric analysis undertaken during the initial assessment of the building with details uncovered before the second phase added where appropriate.

4.2.2 *Exterior*

The external elevations are of yellow stock brick (fabric 3032 using the Greater London archaeological system of building material classification) laid in Flemish bond. The fenestration on the front and north flank wall has segmental heads and arches. The rear windows (of which there are two per floor) have segmental arches. The windows have rendered reveals. The front elevation's window arches have prominent brick keystones. There are sash windows throughout which, on the front elevation, have two panes to the upper sash, separated by a single mullion, and a single pane beneath. The sash windows on the side elevation have single pane sashes. On the front elevation the ground and first floors are emphasised by having larger windows. There is a rendered string-course between the ground floor and the basement and a

rendered parapet forming the entablature to the orders implied above the string course. The door case is simple with scrolled consoles supporting the cornice. The six-panel front door is topped by a plain rectangular fanlight. The exterior joinery is painted red. There are railings fronting the street. The basement windows on the front elevation are probably replacements of the original windows. The rear yard is at basement level and is surrounded on all sides by walls, the north and east yard walls being retaining walls.

4.2.3 The building has two chimneystacks, one on the south wall central to the front room with the other running north-south between the front and rear rooms.

4.2.4 *Basement*

The basement is likely to have housed the building's service functions. The main north room is likely to have been the kitchen, as it has the widest fireplace. The back door leads out into a brick shed, part of which may have housed a privy. The historic maps indicate that it was constructed between 1921 and 1948. The stairs to the basement have plain square sectioned balusters that may be later additions or may reflect the lower status of the basement.

4.2.5 The basement's front door leads via a lightwell to four vaulted coal cellars. The door to the second vault from the north has been blocked with brickwork and a steel door inserted. The vaults each have a circular soffit shaft for lighting.

4.2.6 The basement floor of the building had been only slightly altered since the initial assessment. It was possible to observe that the north wall of the northwest room of this floor had been horizontally strengthened with three steel 'I' sections each of approximately 20x25 cm with a 2.5° taper flanges. These add a strengthening element between the outer wall of the building and the central interior wall of the building.

Plate 2: 'I' section beams in the north of the basement

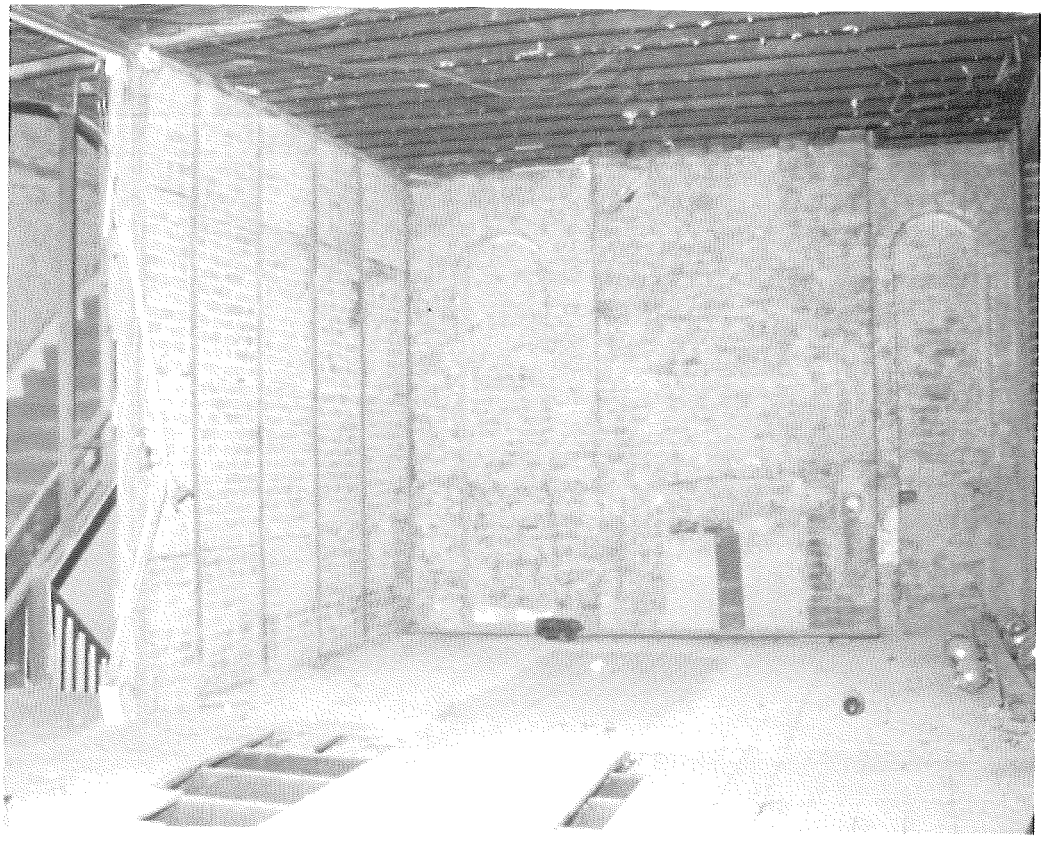


Plate 3a: Interior, ground floor, looking towards staircase (southeast)

Plate 3b: Interior, ground floor, looking north

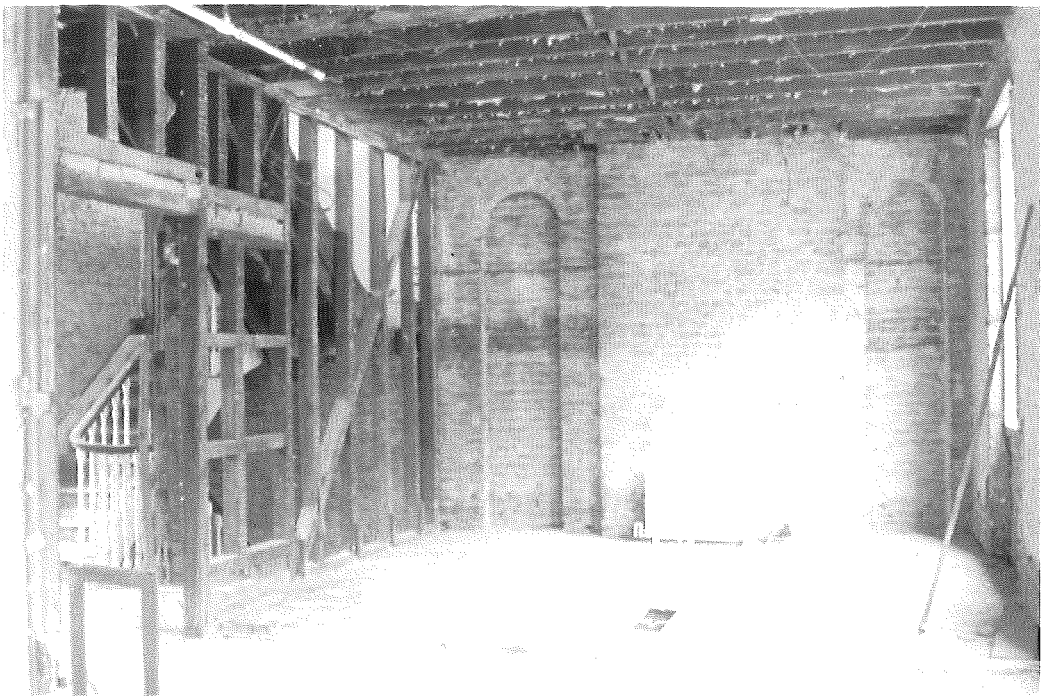


Plate 4a: Interior, first floor, looking towards staircase (southeast)

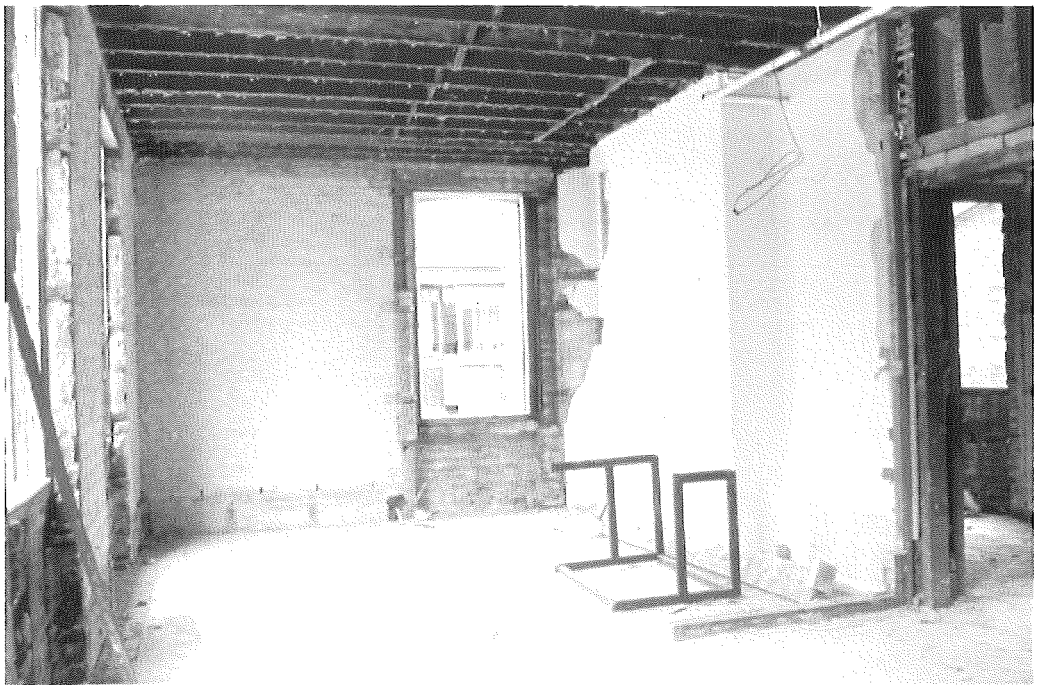


Plate 4b: Interior, first floor, looking north

Plate 5a: Interior, second floor, looking towards staircase (southeast)

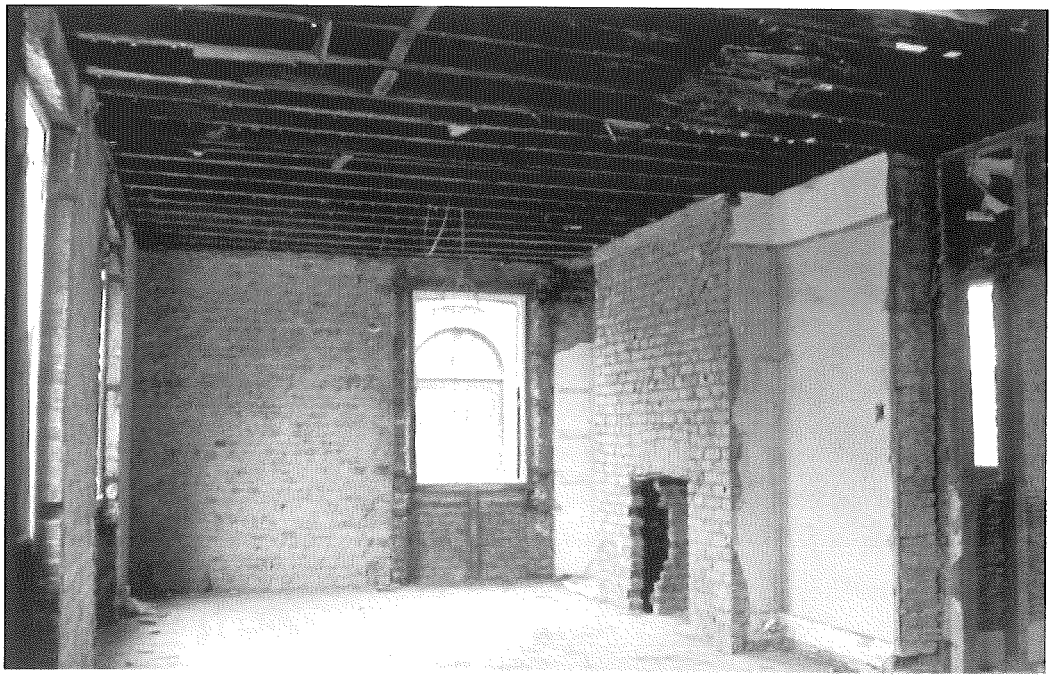


Plate5b: Interior, second floor, looking north

4.2.7 *Ground floor*

The whole of the ground floor is constructed of yellow stock brick (fabric 3035) laid in Flemish bond. Following the removal of the render and plaster on the interior of the walls, it could be observed that the internal dividing walls, enclosing a small lobby room to the northeast and the stairwell to the southeast, were constructed with a horizontal/vertical grid of bonding timbers encased in the brickwork. This wall is only one brick thick. The use of bonding timbers is therefore entirely usual. Following the removal of the lath and plaster ceiling of the ground floor, it was possible to observe the wall plate of a timber stud wall extending from the northern limit of the staircase wall to the south side of the doorway in the western face of the building. There was no evidence of this wall remaining on the floor of the room.

4.2.8 *First floor*

The south wall of the southwest room had cupboards built into two recessed arches either side of the chimneystack. The skirting boards were observed to emphasise the prominence of the front rooms on this floor. The rear room was a bathroom and had probably been a bathroom for much of the twentieth century.

4.2.9 During the second phase of assessment, it was observed that bonding timbers are encased in the brick of the external walls (fabric 3035) to a height of approximately 30cm, but do not continue down into the ground floor walls. It is therefore assumed that these bonding timbers are related to a strengthening of the walls purely at the level at which it holds the floor beams. There were similar bonding timbers around each of the window openings. The wall dividing the staircase from the front rooms of the first floor was observed to be a timber stud wall with a single diagonal bracing timber. All of the internal walls and ceiling beams showed evidence of lath and plaster covering. Within the ceiling beams, it was possible to observe the wall plate of a timber stud wall aligned with that observed in the ceiling of the ground floor. This wall can be seen in the pre-development plans of the building.

4.2.10 *Second floor*

Following the removal of wall coverings, the fabric and construction of the second floor were observed to be identical to the floor below with the same brick set bracing timbers at floor beam level and a timber stud wall, this time with two diagonal bracing timbers, dividing the staircase from the front rooms. The rear room most recently functioned as a kitchen.

4.2.11 *Roof*

The trusses made visible by the removal of the lath and plaster ceiling below were recorded by written description (4.19). Above the line of the ceiling beams, it was

observed that the wall at the southern end of the roof-space is continued in a lesser quality, dark purple brick (fabric 3032 using the Greater London archaeological system of building material classification) laid in Flemish bond. This is a usual method of construction where brickwork is not intended to be seen. The roof itself is of slate. Structurally, it is hipped to the northeast and northwest corners and held by two timber king-post trusses. At the south end of the roof, the purlins sit directly on the brick wall with one additionally supported by a single vertical timber strut resting on a step in the brickwork.

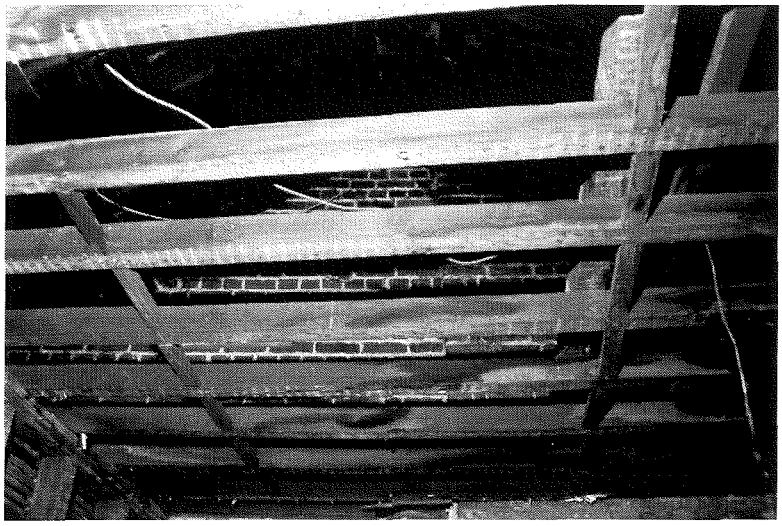


Plate 6: Brickwork in roof-space, concealed behind ceiling timbers

4.3 Surviving Mouldings

4.3.1 The initial assessment of the site stated that there was potential for original cornices to survive above modern suspended ceilings. Upon inspection, all cornices on the ground, first and second floors were found to have been removed rendering further recording and assessment impossible.

4.3.2 The initial assessment also concluded that differences in the skirting board mouldings throughout the building demonstrated the status of certain areas, notably that the front rooms of the first floor were of a higher level of importance. The skirting boards in all of the principal rooms of the building had been removed prior to investigation and it was not possible to further record or analyse these.

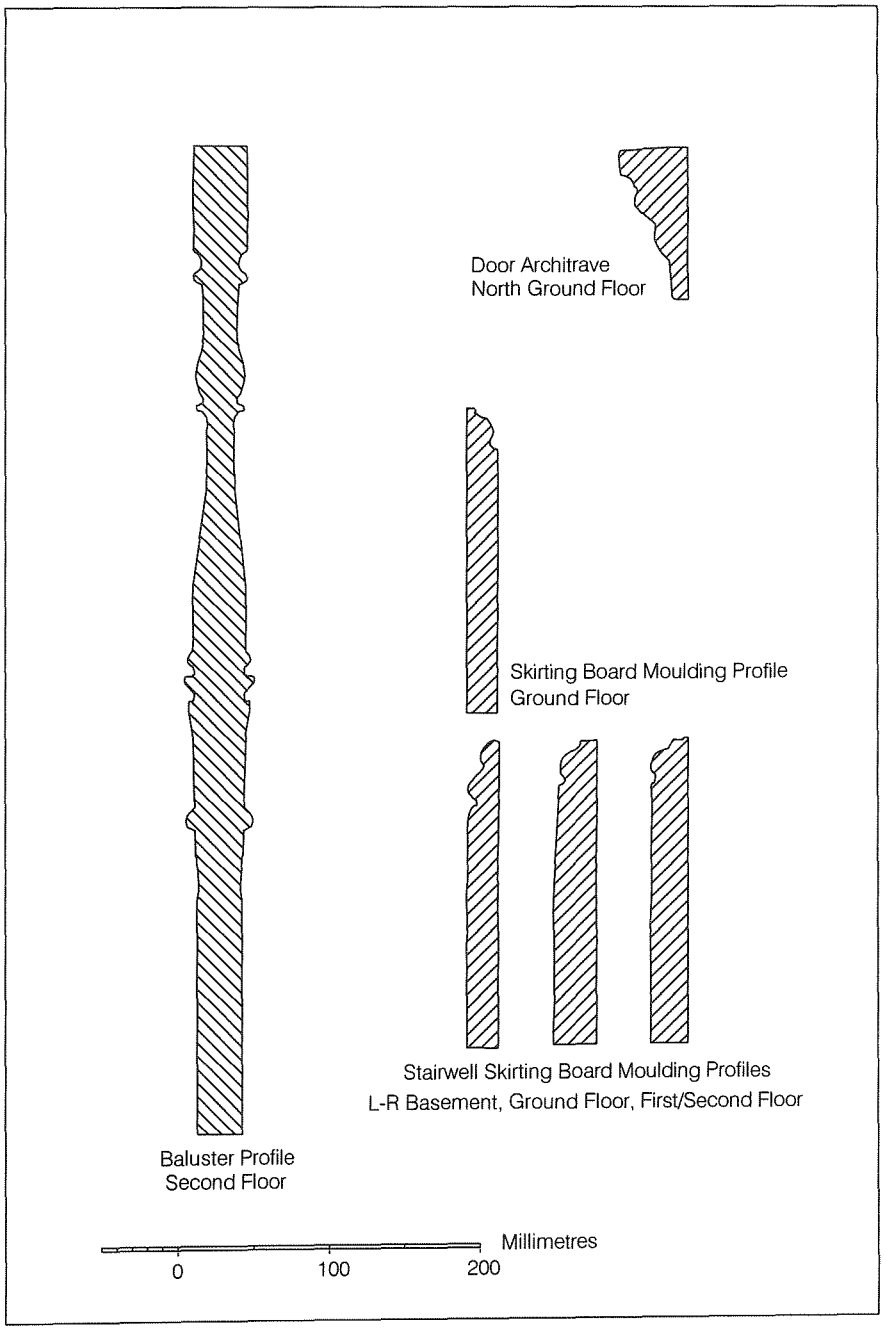


Figure 7
Moulding Profiles
1:5

4.3.4 Skirting boards remained in existence throughout the height of the stairway. These were recorded in profile at a scale of 1:1 as were the turned balusters of the stair rail between the first and second floors that is original to the building. It was also possible to record a surviving door surround moulding on the ground floor interior.

4.3.5 Between the first and second floors, the skirting board mouldings were of almost identical design and it was not possible to see a differentiation of status between floors. The skirting boards in the basement were of a more elaborate design. It is likely, however, that these are a modern replacement, as revealed by some unpainted sections. This is in keeping with the original assessment of this floor as a service area.

4.3.6 The moulding of the door surround on the ground floor interior was of a door facing north into the courtyard of the site. It is decorative in comparison with the rest of the door surrounds in the building and there is no corresponding decoration on the exterior of the doorway. This would appear to demonstrate that the doorway was intended to be seen from the inside only and that it was unlikely to have been used as a visitor entrance, this being the large door in the west of the ground floor facing onto the street.

4.4 Roof Trusses

4.4.1 It was recommended in the Desktop Assessment of the site that a sample roof truss should be recorded after the removal of the suspended ceiling of the second floor. At the time of the Archaeological Building Recording phase of the project, safe access to the roof trusses could not been established and, consequently, the trusses were not drawn. Their location, 3.33m and 6.66m south from the north wall, was recorded in plan. The two roof trusses were observed to be timber king-post trusses. The king posts themselves have splayed heads and sloping joggles supporting raking braces towards their bases. The trusses are strengthened with wrought iron bolts and straps. The principal rafters are set into notches cut into the tie beams. These joints are also fastened with wrought iron bolts.

5 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

5.1 Where possible, mouldings were recorded prior to their removal as part of the proposed development although the majority had been removed prior to the Archaeological Building Recording phase of the project.

5.2 Safe access to the roof trusses of the building at 15 Dock Street could not be established and, as a concession to this, the trusses were located in plan and recorded by written description. A plan showing the position of the roof trusses will be added to the archive.

5.3 A brief fabric analysis of the building was carried out to assess materials and construction details uncovered since the initial Desktop Assessment was carried out.

5.4 A photographic record of the building was also created as part of the Archaeological Building recording phase.

5.5 15 Dock Street functioned as a purely residential building, the ground floor functioning as a reception area. The basement probably housed the kitchen and the first floor, as identified by the initial assessment, was the principal floor of the building, likely housing the dining area etc although conclusive proof of this was unavailable during the building recording phase of the project. The only alteration to the building during its use appears to have been the modern insertion of kitchens and bathrooms on all floors to create individual flats.

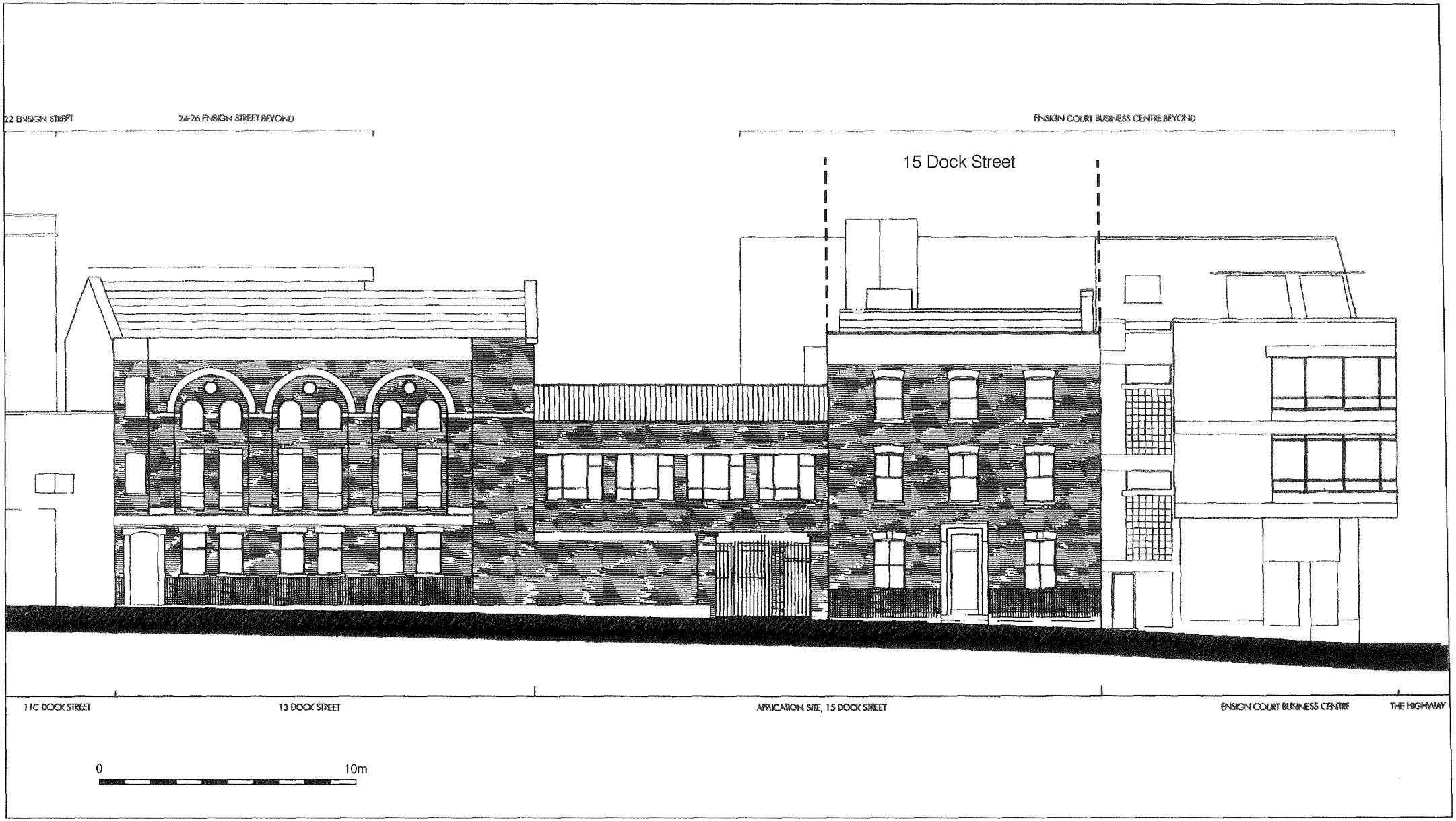
5.6 No further recommendations have arisen from this phase of the project.

5.7 This report, with the on-site recording and photographic record, will be added to the site archive alongside the initial assessment document.

6 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

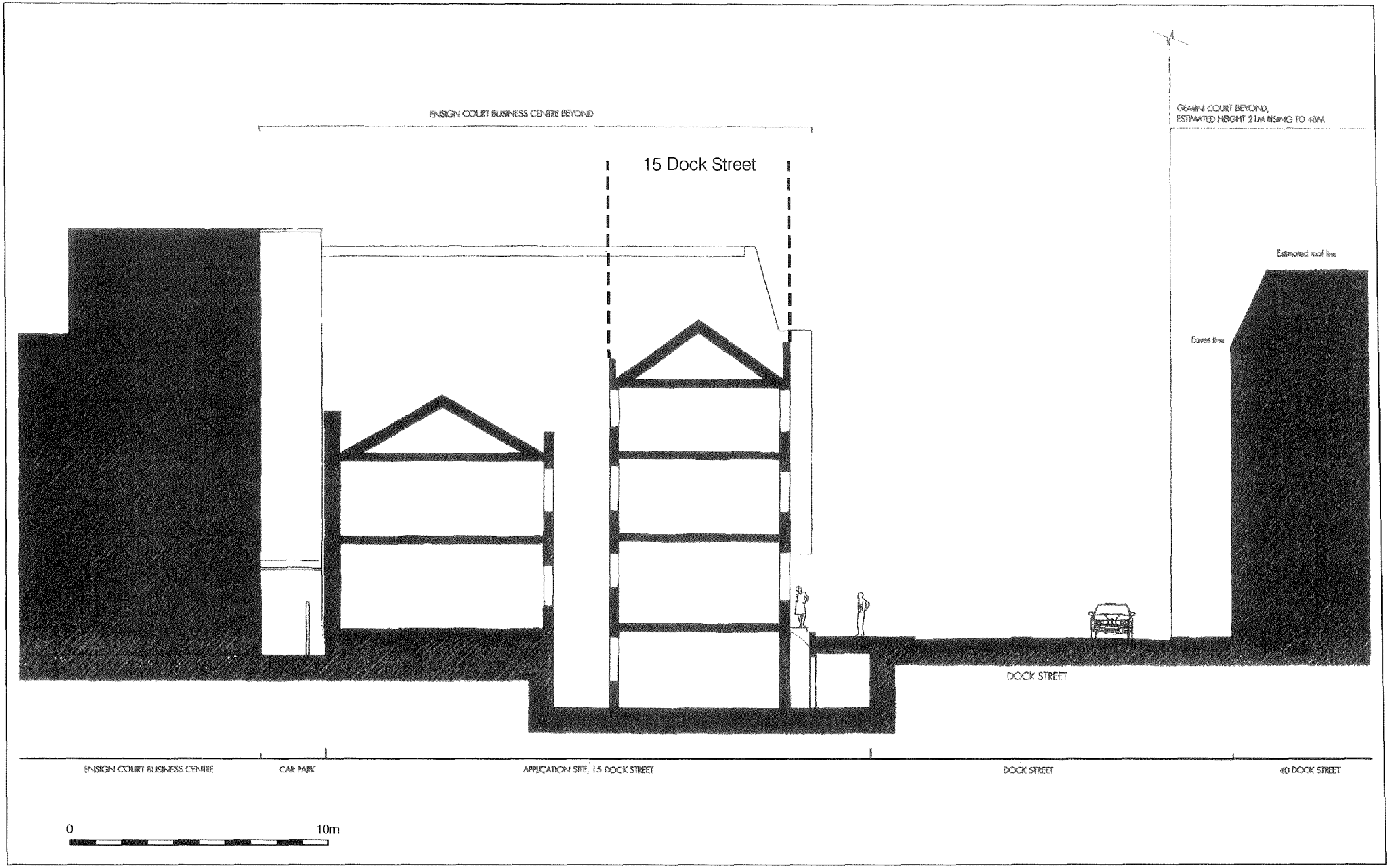
6.1 Pre-Construct Archaeology would like to thank Mr Sohail Chohan of Sterling Partners for commissioning the work and Yit Cheen of Sterling Partners for his assistance on site.

6.2 In addition, the author would like to Ellie Sayer for assistance on site, Josephine Brown and Adrian Nash for CAD, Ken Sabel for project management and editing and David Divers of English Heritage for his comments on this report.



Based on a drawing by Tasou Associates, Architects and Structural Engineers

Figure 8
Existing Elevation
Approximately 1:200



Based on a drawing by Tasou Associates, Architects and Structural Engineers

Figure 9a
Section A-A
Approximately 1:200

Based on a drawing by Tasou Associates, Architects and Structural Engineers

Figure 9b
Existing Floor Plan
Approximately 1:200

APPENDIX TWO: OASIS INFORMATION

1.1 OASIS ID: preconst1-6389

Project details

Project name	15 Dock Street
Short description of the project	Recording of surviving mouldings as identified in assessment. Also production of photographic archive.
Project dates	Start: 06-01-2005 End: 07-01-2005
Previous/future work	Yes / No
Type of project	Building Recording
Site status	None
Current Land use	Other 2 - In use as a building
Prompt	Planning condition

Project location

Country	England
Site location	GREATER LONDON TOWER HAMLETS TOWER HAMLETS 15 Dock Street
Postcode	E1
Study area	100.00 Square metres
National grid reference	TQ 3418 8072 Point

Project creators

Name of Organisation	Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd
Project brief originator	Self (i.e. landowner, developer, etc.)
Project design originator	Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd
Project director/manager	Ken Sabel
Project supervisor	James Dixon
Sponsor or funding body	Developer

Project archives

Physical Archive Exists?	No
Digital Archive Exists?	No
Paper Archive recipient	LAARC
Paper Contents	'other'
Paper Media available	'Drawing','Photograph','Report'

Project bibliography 1

Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	Archaeological Building Recording of 15 Dock Street, London Borough of Tower Hamlets, E1
Author(s)/Editor(s)	Dixon, J
Date	2005
Issuer or publisher	Pre-Construct Archaeology
Place of issue or publication	London
Entered by	James Dixon (jdixon@pre-construct.com)
Entered on	8 November 2005