

84 ABBEY STREET

LONDON SE1

LONDON BOROUGH OF SOUTHWARK

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING

BRIEF

AYT 05


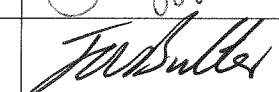
MAY 2005

DOCUMENT VERIFICATION

84 ABBEY STREET
LONDON SE1
LONDON BOROUGH OF SOUTHWARK

Watching Brief

Quality Control

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**An Archaeological Watching Brief at the Former Royal George Site, 84
Abbey Street, London SE1, London Borough of Southwark**

Site Code: AYT 05

Central National Grid Reference: TQ 3353 7936

Written by Shane Maher

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Commissioning Client: Wellingtonia

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1 ABSTRACT

- 1.1 This report details the background and findings from the archaeological monitoring of the excavation of foundation trenches at the site of the former Royal George public house, 84 Abbey Street, London SE1, London Borough of Southwark.
- 1.2 The site lies within the monastic precinct of Bermondsey Abbey, the main church buildings of which lay within the area of Bermondsey Square¹. The site was monitored to record evidence of any surviving archaeological strata.
- 1.3 No significant archaeological features or deposits were encountered during the watching brief. Natural sandy gravels were sealed by probable medieval plough soil, which was in turn covered by modern dumped deposits. This sequence was observed across the watching brief area. An 18th/19th century well was observed in the west corner of site.

¹ Grimes, W.F., 1968, The Excavations of Roman and Medieval London, fig 51

2 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited between the 21st March and 10th May 2005, of the excavation of foundation trenches, for a block of 12 flats, at the site of the former Royal George public house, 84 Abbey Street, London SE1, London Borough of Southwark. The National Grid Reference is TQ 3353 7936.
- 1.2 This followed the methodology set out in: Archaeological Guidance Paper 3 Standards and Practices in Archaeological Fieldwork in London: Archaeological Guidance Paper 4: Archaeological Reports Archaeological Guidance Paper 5 Watching briefs. The watching brief was carried out to Institute of Field Archaeologist (I.F.A) standards.
- 2.2 A Method Statement for the Archaeological Watching Brief was written by John Butler of PCA (January 2005). The work was commissioned on behalf of Wellingtonia. The watching brief was undertaken by the author, and was project managed by John Butler.
- 2.3 The watching aimed to determine, as far as is reasonably possible, the location extent, date, character, condition, significance and quality of any surviving archaeological remains liable to be threatened by the new buildings' foundations.
- 2.4 The northern part of the site fronting Abbey Street was heavily truncated down to the natural gravel by the basement of the Royal George Pub.
- 2.5 The site code is AYT04.



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Figure 1
Site Location
1:10,000

3 PLANNING BACKGROUND & RESEARCH QUESTIONS

3.1 The archaeological watching brief was a requirement placed on the site to fulfil an archaeological condition placed on the planning permission by Southwark Council following the advice of the Archaeological Monitor, Sarah Gibson.

3.2 The Archaeological Method Statement contained the following research questions:

- What is the natural topography of the site and is there any evidence of palaeochannels present on site?
- Is there any evidence of prehistoric activity on site?
- Is there any evidence of roman activity on site?
- Is there any evidence of Saxon or medieval activity on site, especially that associated with the precinct of Bermondsey Abbey?
- Is there any evidence of post-medieval activity, especially industrial such as tanning?

4 GEOLOGICAL AND TOPOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

4.1 GEOLOGY

4.1.1 According to Geological Survey of Great Britain (1:50000 series, England and Wales), South London Sheet 270, the site overlies river terraces.

4.2 TOPOGRAPHY

4.2.1 The site lies on relatively even ground, with ground level in the range of 3.46m OD to 3.43m OD.

5 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

- 5.1 The site is located within the monastic precinct of Bermondsey Abbey, the main buildings of which lay in the area of Bermondsey².

An evaluation at 170-176 Grange road in 1989 revealed a pit containing quantities of Late Iron Age/early Roman material, and a series of linear trenches containing Roman finds. A probable 18th century pit, lined with horn cores, was also revealed³.

² Grimes, W.F., 1968, *The Excavations of Roman and Medieval London*, fig 51

³ Thompson, A., Westman, A & Dyson, T, 1998 *Archaeology in Greater London 1965-90: a guide to records of excavations by the Museum of London*, p 187

6 METHODOLOGY

- 6.1 The investigation area was in the footprint of the former Royal George public house.
- 6.2 The foundation trenches were excavated by mechanical excavator, using toothless bucket, under archaeological observation.
- 6.3 No trenches were entered for safety reasons, as they were over a depth of 2m . Records were made at surface level with deposits examined as they were extracted. Representative sections were drawn at a scale of 1:10 with context descriptions entered on pro forma sheets.
- 6.4 A Temporary Bench Mark with a value of 3.55m OD, was established on the northeastern edge of site, traversed from a spot height taken from a manhole at the junction of Tower Bridge Road and Abbey Street, from which all levels were calculated.
- 6.5 The written archive will be deposited at the London Archaeological Archive and Resource Centre (LAARC).

7 ARCHAEOLOGICAL SEQUENCE (Fig.3)

- 7.1 A natural, light yellowish brown sandy gravel [1] was observed throughout site at a level of between 1.86m OD and 1.3m OD.
- 7.2 Overlying this, a mid to dark grey brown sandy silt medieval plough soil [2] was observed at levels between 2.05m OD to 1.86m OD.
- 7.3 A post-medieval, dark grey brown silty sand, dump layer [6] was observed overlying this in the west of site at levels between 2.45m OD to 2.05m OD.
- 7.4 A construction cut [5], for what appeared to be an 18th/19th century well [4] and its associated 19th century backfill [3] were observed at a top height of 2.45m OD to the west of site, cutting through layer [6].
- 7.5 A deposit of modern made ground was observed between 3.46m OD and 2.05m OD overlying the above layers in the south of site.
- 7.6 Basements of the former Royal George pub had heavily truncated the north of site to a height of 1.3m OD at which level only natural gravel was observed.

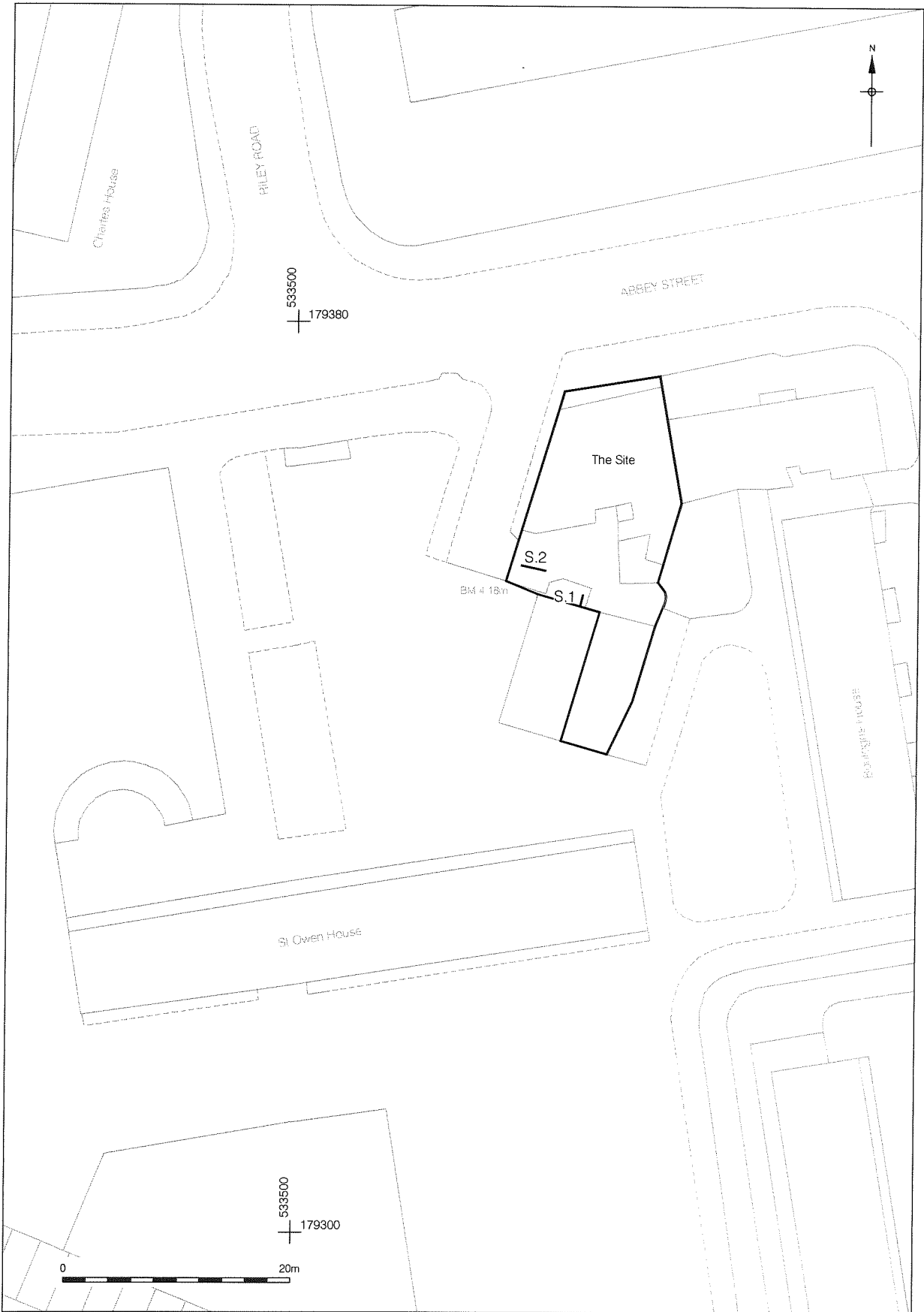


Figure 2
Location of the Sections
1:500

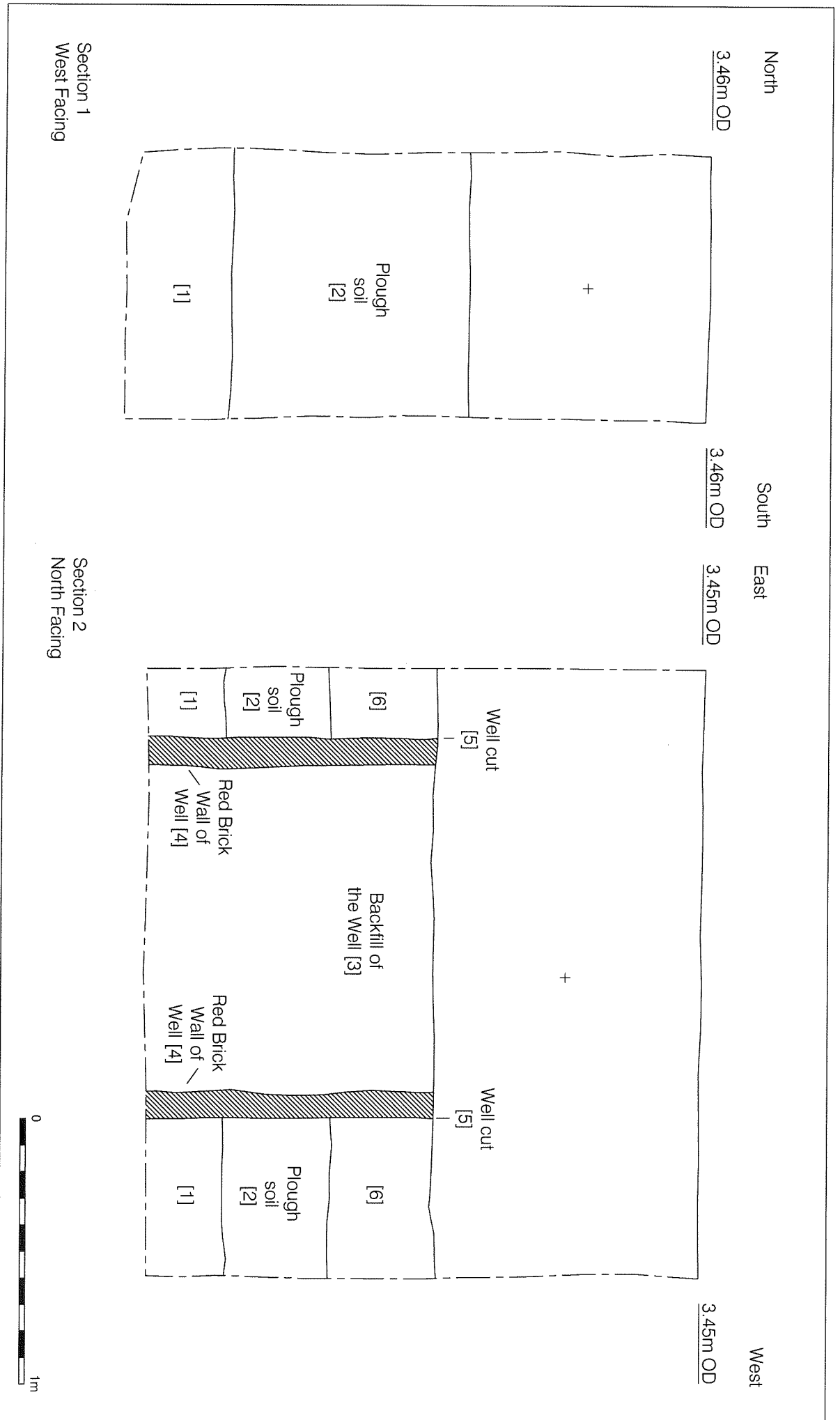


Figure 3
Sections 1 and 2
1:20

8 CONCLUSIONS

- 8.1 The principle objective of the watching brief was to determine the presence or otherwise of archaeological deposits and finds, especially that associated with the precinct of Bermondsey Abbey.
- 8.2 No evidence of archaeological features was observed with the exception of an 18th/19th century well. A possible ploughsoil of probable medieval date was observed sealing the natural gravel. Most of the site had been truncated, to natural gravels, by the basement of the Royal George public house.
- 8.3 The well had been deliberately backfilled possibly during construction of the public house, as the fill did not appear to be earlier than the late 19th century.

9 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- 9.1 Pre-Construct Archaeology would like to thank Wellingtonia for funding the watching brief, and commissioning PCA to monitor the works. The author would like to thank John Butler for project management and Adrian Nash for the illustrations.

10 **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

Grimes, W.F., 1968, *The Excavations of Roman and Medieval London*

Thompson, A., Westman, A & Dyson, T, 1998 *Archaeology in Greater London 1965-90: a guide to records of excavations by the Museum of London*

Butler, J., *Method Statement for an Archaeological Watching Brief at The Former Royal George Pub, 84 Abbey Street, London Borough of Southwark SE1*, Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd., unpub. report

APPENDIX 1 CONTEXT INDEX

CONTEXT	TYPE	DESCRIPTION
1	layer	Natural
2	layer	Medieval plough soil
3	fill	Backfill
4	masonry	Red brick well
5	cut	Construction cut
6	layer	Post-medieval dump

APPENDIX 2 OASIS FORM

OASIS ID: preconst1-8335

Project details

Project name	Watching Brief at The Former Royal George Pub
Short description of the project	Between March and May 2005 Pre-Construct Archaeology carried out a watching brief on the site of the Royal George Pub, 84 Abbey Street, London Borough of Southwark. No archaeological features were found with the exception of a late post-medieval well cut through post-medieval dumps and a possible medieval ploughsoil.
Project dates	Start: 21-03-2005 End: 10-05-2005
Previous/future work	No / No
Any associated project reference codes	AYT 05 - Sitecode
Type of project	Recording project
Current Land use	Vacant Land 1 - Vacant land previously developed
Monument type	PLOUGHSOIL Uncertain
Monument type	BRICK WELL Post Medieval
Investigation type	'Watching Brief'
Prompt	Direction from Local Planning Authority - PPG16

Project location

Country	England
Site location	GREATER LONDON SOUTHWARK BERMONDSEY ROTHERHITHE AND SOUTHWARK The Former Royal George Pub, 84 Abbey Street
Postcode	SE1
Study area	294.00 Square metres
National grid reference	TQ 3353 7936 Point

Height OD Min: 1.30m Max: 1.86m

Project creators

Name of Organisation Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd

Project brief originator Wellingtonia

Project design originator John Butler

Project director/manager Jon Butler

Project supervisor Shane Maher

Sponsor or funding body Wellingtonia

Project bibliography 1

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