

2-4 Idol Lane, EC3 - City of London

An Archaeological Watching Brief Report

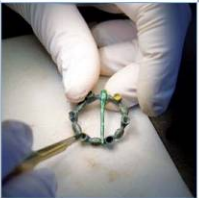
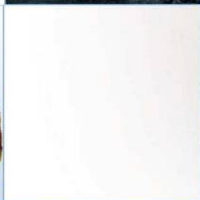
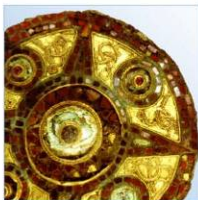
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National Grid Reference Number: NGR 533129 180778

AOC Project No: 32668

Site Code: IDL 14

Date: March 2015



ARCHAEOLOGY

HERITAGE

CONSERVATION

2-4 Idol Lane, EC3 - City of London

An Archaeological Watching Brief Report

On Behalf of:	RPS Planning & Development 14 Cornhill London EC3V 3ND
and	Silkstone Assets Limited
National Grid Reference (NGR):	TQ 533129 180778
AOC Project No:	32668
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Date of Report:	March 2015

This document has been prepared in accordance with AOC standard operating procedures.

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Non-Technical Summary

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by AOC Archaeology Group between October 2014 and March 2015 at the site of 2/4 Idol Lane, City of London. The work was undertaken on behalf of RPS Planning and Development and Silkstone Assets Limited. The aim of the watching brief was to monitor the excavation of any intrusive works required on site during the redevelopment of the current building.

The watching brief was conducted on 11 trenches which included underpinning pits; lift pit, manholes and drainage works. Natural terrace gravels and sand were observed in all excavated trenches, many indicating banding which suggests undisturbed deposits. Only a single possible pit was recorded and has been interpreted as being post medieval in date. The footings of the current building were also exposed during the works.

No significant archaeological features were recorded on site.

No further work is recommended. Due to the nature of the project, publication will be restricted to a summary of results in London Archaeology Round-up and publication via the Archaeological Data Service (ADS). The archive, consisting of paper records, drawings, photographs, and digital records, will be deposited with the LAARC.

1 Introduction

- 1.1 This document details the findings of an archaeological watching brief undertaken at the 2/4 Idol Lane, EC33 in the City of London (Figure 1). The investigation took place from October 2014 to March 2015 and comprised the monitoring of the excavation for a new lift pit, underpinning pits, drainage and manholes.
- 1.2 The site is centred on National Grid Reference (NGR) 533129 180778, located to on the west side of Idol Lane in the City of London, Eastcheap Conservation Area.
- 1.3 The existing building comprises office accommodation, totalling a net area of approximately 16,800 ft² arranged over a basement, lower ground, ground and three upper floors. Consented development was granted for the change of use of part lower ground and part ground floor from office (B1) to retail (A1/A3) use, the addition of two storeys of office (B1) accommodation, a one storey plant room and cycle parking spaces.

2 Planning Background

- 2.1 The building is not listed but falls within the Eastcheap Conservation Area.
- 2.2 City of London UDP Map 11.2 (Archaeological Potential) shows the site to be in an area of limited archaeological potential or area where archaeological remains are known to have been removed.
- 2.3 The planning submission for the site was accompanied by an Archaeological Assessment (RPS 2013).
- 2.4 Permission for development (Conditional) was granted by the City of London on 6 May 2014. Condition 17 of the consent reads;

No works except demolition to basement slab level shall take place until the developer has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work to be carried out in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning

Authority. This shall include all on site work, including details of any temporary works which may have an impact on the archaeology of the site and all off site work such as the analysis, publication and archiving of the results. All works shall be carried out and completed as approved, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason - In order to allow an opportunity for investigations to be made in an area where remains of archaeological interest are understood to exist in accordance with the following policies of the Unitary Development Plan 2002: ARC 2, ARC 3.

- 2.5 Discussion with the City of London's Assistant Director Historic Environment indicated that the appropriate programme of archaeological work would be an archaeological watching brief on development impacts. A WSI was produced by RPS (2014) which set out the watching brief protocols as required to discharge Planning Condition 17.

3. Geology and Topography

- 3.1 Topographic survey of the Site indicates that surface of the existing basement floor is recorded at 7.94m OD. Topographic survey indicates that Idol Lane is recorded at circa 14.50m OD at its junction with Eastcheap and at circa 14.0m OD outside of the Site, dropping towards the Thames.

- 3.2 The BGS on-line mapping indicates that the Site is located on the Finsbury Gravel Terrace, overlying London Clay.

4. Archaeological and Historical Background

The below information is extracted from the Written scheme of Investigation (RPS 2014).

- 4.1 The Site is located in the Eastcheap Conservation Area.
- 4.2 Information from the Eastcheap Conservation Area Character Summary & Management Strategy (2013, 10) includes that the Site is located at the heart of Roman London with the basilica and forum located between Fenchurch Street and Leadenhall Street in close proximity to Eastcheap. The road layout established by the Romans included north-south routes aligning with present day Gracechurch Street and Botolph Lane, with waterfront warehouses known to have existed near the Thames. Evidence of Roman residential uses in the area includes the late Roman bath house discovered between Idol Lane and St Mary at Hill.
- 4.3 Of particular significance in relation to the Site are the GLHER entries for archaeological works undertaken to the immediate north and east of the Site at 30-40 Eastcheap/37-39 St Mary Hill and 1-4 Great Tower Street respectively.
- 4.4 Information from Schofield and Maloney (1998, 267 & 297) provides the following information regarding these two sites.

30-40 Eastcheap/37-39 St Mary Hill

- 4.5 Archaeological Site Code ECH 88. Archaeological excavations in the basement of the standing building recorded natural brickearth cut by beam-slots for a Roman timber framed building, containing at least eight rooms. Later archaeological features included a medieval chalk-lined well and post-medieval cess pits along with the chalk walls of a medieval cellar.

1-4 Great Tower Street

- 4.6 Archaeological Site Code TWR 89. Excavations recorded brickearth cut by the foundations of an east-west aligned Roman clay and timber building. Roman rubbish and cess pits were recorded along with medieval chalk-lined cess pits and post-medieval wells and cellars fronting on to Great Tower Street and Idol Lane to the north and west.

i. The London Archaeological Archive

- 4.7 The following information was retrieved from the London Archaeological Archive (visited on 12th November 2013).

30-40 Eastcheap, 37-39 St Mary Hill

- 4.8 The area of excavation on this site was confined to one part of the site, as the rest had been double-basemented in the C19th.
- 4.9 Where present, brickearth on top of the natural gravel was recorded at an upper height of 11.15m OD with traces of gravel metalling (a postulated Roman road from Canon Street) also recorded at 11.15m OD. Plans within the archive indicated that the excavated beam-slots for the Roman timber-framed building were recorded at circa 10.80m OD with the floor surfaces at circa 10.90m OD to 11.95m OD.
- 4.10 In addition to the area of excavation, five test pits were dug at the southern part of the site against the Party Wall for 2-4 Idol Lane. These provided the following information;

- Test Pit 1. Dug from a sub-basement level of 7.93m OD. This test pit was excavated through the fill of a large feature (no dating evidence retrieved but interpreted as medieval or post-medieval) which survived to a depth of 0.94m (i.e. circa 6.99m OD).
- Test Pit 2. Dug from basement floor level of circa 10.22m OD. Natural sand recorded at 8.90m OD overlain by a deposit of gravel circa 0.41m thick. Brickearth was recorded at an upper level of 9.90m OD. A large feature, interpreted as a pit circa 1.50m deep, was recorded cutting through the natural. No levels were provided for this “pit” but the information from the brickearth would suggest that the base of it was recorded at circa 8.40m OD. Dating evidence circa 1000-1150 AD was retrieved from the fill of the “pit”.
- Test Pit 3. Dug from basement floor level of circa 10.22m OD. The large “pit” observed in TP2 was also observed in TP 3, surviving to a depth of 7.45m OD. No dating evidence was retrieved from TP 3 but the archive report indicated that the “pit” had a straight north-south edge.
- Test Pit 4. Dug from basement floor level of circa 10.21m OD. Gravel was recorded at 9.26m OD with brickearth 0.16m thick on top of this with a sandier brickearth circa 0.43m thick above.
- Test Pit 5. Dug from basement floor level of circa 10.21m OD. A post medieval cellar was recorded to 9.25m OD. No information regarding whether gravel was reached or not in this test pit.

4.11 On the completion of these test pits, five additional test pits were dug against the Party Walls – two in the sub-basement of 30-40 Eastcheap and three in the sub-basement of 37-39 St Mary Hill. Sub-basement slab levels were recorded at 7.73m OD in 30-40 Eastcheap and at 5.97m OD in St Mary Hill.

4.12 These produced the following information;

- Test Pit 6. Natural gravel recorded at 7.18m OD. No archaeology recorded.
- Test Pit 7. Natural gravel recorded at 7.00m OD. No archaeology recorded.
- Test Pits 8 to 10. Natural gravel recorded at 5.53m OD. No archaeology recorded.

4.13 Information from the Test Pit Plan in the Site Archive indicates that Test Pits 1 to 6 inclusive were excavated against the southern wall of 30-40 Eastcheap (northern wall of 2-4 Idol Lane) and Test Pits 8 and 9 were excavated against the eastern wall of St Mary Hill (western wall of 2-4 Idol Lane).

1-4 Great Tower Street

4.14 The Archive report for this site indicates that natural gravels were cut by Roman and medieval archaeology with the highest level recorded on the gravel being 10.87m OD and the lowest being 10.20m OD. Towards the southern end of the site, natural gravel was recorded at 7.67m OD as the natural topography drops towards the river. Brickearth, where recorded, was truncated to between 10.76m OD and 11.00m OD.

4.15 In addition to the excavation area at the northern end of the site a series of fourteen Test Pits were excavated across the site. Test Pits 1 to 6 were archaeological observed with Test Pits 7 to 14 not observed and the archaeological “record” created from engineers logs.

- Test Pit 1. Excavated against the Idol Lane frontage of the site. Natural gravel recorded at 9.12m OD with brickearth at 9.98m OD. Brickearth cut by post-holes for a clay and timber building.
- Test Pit 2. Natural gravel recorded at 9.67m OD with brickearth at 9.95m OD. No archaeology recorded.

- Test Pit 3. Excavated against the Idol Lane frontage of the site to 9.24m OD. Concrete and post-medieval cellar fill recorded.
- Test Pit 4. Natural gravel recorded at 6.62m OD. No archaeology recorded.
- Test Pit 5. Natural gravel recorded at 6.55m OD. Thin layer of sand and chalk above (undated) and then concrete floor.
- Test Pit 6. Natural gravel recorded at 6.50m OD. No archaeology recorded.
- Test Pit 7. Natural gravel recorded at 5.20 to 5.70m OD. A “dark-earth” with tile and charcoal was recorded between 6.60 and 7.10m OD.
- Test Pit 8. Basement floor recorded at 7.03m OD. Natural gravel recorded at 6.46m OD. No archaeology recorded.
- Test Pit 9. Basement floor recorded at 7.04m OD. Natural gravel recorded at 6.60m OD. No archaeology recorded.
- Test Pit 10. Basement floor recorded at 10.41m OD. Natural gravel recorded at 7.91m OD. Archaeological deposits (not specified) present from 8.51 to 9.51m OD.
- Test Pit 11. Basement floor recorded at 10.06m OD. Archaeological deposits (not specified) survive at 9.90m OD for a depth of 0.60m.
- Test Pit 12. Basement floor recorded at 10.42m OD. Natural gravel recorded at 10.00m OD. A cut feature recorded to a depth of 8.92m OD.
- Test Pit 13. Basement floor recorded at 10.42m OD. Archaeological deposits (not specified) survive to a thickness of 1.0m but no levels.
- Test Pit 14. Natural gravel and brickearth recorded. No archaeological remains.

Other archaeological sites

- 4.16 Information regarding other archaeological sites within the vicinity of the Site indicates that at 41 Eastcheap (MLO97823 – Site Code EAE 01), natural brickearth was cut by a series of early Roman quarry pits and timber buildings, with the natural gravel recorded across the site at c.10.95m OD. This was capped by a thin layer of natural brickearth, which was probably truncated, recorded at c.11.27m OD.
- 4.17 Information from an archaeological evaluation at 3 Lovat Lane (Site Code LVA 08, towards the northern end of Lovat Lane close to the junction with Eastcheap) indicated that Roman and post medieval archaeological deposits were found. Natural deposits of brickearth were recorded between 10.45m OD and 11.03m OD and archaeological deposits at heights ranging between around 11.10m OD to 11.70m OD.

5. Aims of the Investigation

- 5.1 The aims of the watching brief were defined as being:
- To establish the presence/absence of archaeological remains, within the Site, that may be impacted by development;
 - To determine the extent, condition, nature, character, quality and date of any archaeological remains encountered;
 - To record and rapidly sample/excavate any archaeological remains encountered;

- To assess the ecofactual and environmental potential of any archaeological features and deposits;
- To make the results of the investigation available to interested parties.

5.2 The specific aims of the watching brief were defined as being:

- To establish whether the basement of 2-4 Idol Lane has removed all archaeological deposits;
- To establish whether the north-south aligned pit or feature, recorded at 30-40 Eastcheap, 37-39 St Mary Hill from 6.99m OD to an upper level of 8.40m OD, is present in areas to be impacted by development;
- To establish whether other cut features are present on the Site.

6. Methodology

- 6.1 The watching brief consisted of monitoring the excavation for a new lift pit, underpinning pits, drainage and manholes. Some hand excavation took place, alongside the use of a small mini digger.
- 6.2 The excavation, recording and reporting conformed with current best archaeological practice and local and national standards and guidelines
- 6.3 A continuous unique numbering system was employed. For each excavation, a block of numbers in a continuous sequence was allocated. In this report the archaeological fills and layers are represented in curved brackets i.e. (), whilst the cut numbers are represented in square brackets i.e. [].
- 6.4 Written descriptions, comprising both factual data and interpretative elements, were recorded on standardised sheets.

7. Watching Brief Results

Trench 1

Table of the stratigraphic sequence

Context No	Depth	Height of Deposit (mOD)	Description/Interpretation
1	0.20m	6.33m – 6.13m	Concrete floor.
2	0.30m	6.13m – 5.83m	Hardcore rubble.
9	0.40m	5.83m – 5.43m	Grey brown clay silt. Made ground.
5	0.52m	5.43m – 4.91m	Light brown, grey, orange sand and gravel.
6	0.48m	4.91m – 4.43m	Orange and brown dense sand and gravel.
7	0.10m+	4.43m – 4.33m	Light brown and orange sand and gravel.

- 7.1 Trench 1 was located within the basement of the current building, at a height of 6.33mOD, measuring 3.00m x 2.60m (Figure 3).
- 7.2 The earliest deposit in Trench 1 was (7), a 0.10m + thick layer of light brown and orange sand and gravel. This was overlaid by (6) orange and brown dense sandy gravel which was overlaid by (5), a 0.52m thick layer of light brown, grey, orange sand and gravel. These three layers represent the banding of the natural horizon of Finsbury Gravel Terrace.



Plate 1 – Trench 1

- 7.3 Cutting into the upper gravel and sand layer was a post medieval pit [3] which measured 1.00m x 0.60m x 0.40m deep (Section 1, Figure 3). The pit contained two fills (4) and (8). The lowest fill (4) was recorded as black silt with frequent small pebbles. Fill (8) was recorded as yellow sand mottled with black silt. No dating was recorded; however, the nature of the deposit suggests a post medieval date (Plate 1).
- 7.4 Overlying the pit were made ground deposits (9) and (2) which are likely to have been deposited as make up for the overlying concrete horizon (1).

Trench 2

Table of the stratigraphic sequence

Context No	Depth	Height of Deposit (mOD)	Description/Interpretation
1	0.35m	6.33m – 5.98m	Concrete floor and hardcore make up.
10	0.25m+	5.98m – 5.73m	Dark brown and orange gravel and sand.

- 7.5 Trench 2 was located within the basement of the current building, in close proximity to Trench 1, at a height of 6.33mOD, measuring 1.50m x 1.50m x 0.60m deep (Figure 3).
- 7.6 The earliest deposit in Trench 2 was (10), a 0.25m + thick layer of dark brown and orange gravel and sand. This was overlaid by (1), a 0.35m thick layer of hardcore rubble and concrete.
- 7.7 No archaeological features were recorded in Trench 2.

Trenches 3-8

Table of the stratigraphic sequence

Context No	Depth	Height of Deposit (mOD)	Description/Interpretation
11	0.15m	6.33m – 6.18m	Concrete floor.
12	0.65m	6.18m – 5.53m	Loose grey brown sandy silt with hardcore. Make up.
15	0.60m	6.18m – 5.58m	Loose grey brown sandy silt with hardcore. Make up.
14	1.00m	5.53m – 4.53m+	Orange sand and gravel. Natural.

- 7.8 Trenches 3-8 were all located along the southern wall of the basement and were excavated for the purpose of underpinning (Figure 3). As the pits were located within close proximity to each other they have been discussed in the same section. The trenches varied in size, the smallest measuring 1.30m x 0.90m and largest measuring 2.20m x 1.70m.



Plate 2 – Trench 4

- 7.9 The earliest deposit in the trenches was (14), a 1.00m+ thick layer of natural orange sand and gravel. Banding was present in all trenches (Plate 2). Cutting into the natural was [16], a construction cut for [13], blue and yellow brickwork with associated concrete, interpreted as the footings for the current standing building (Plate 3). The brick measured 240mm x 110mm x 70mm.



Plate 3 – Trench 5

- 7.10 Overlying cut [16], were layers of made ground/make up, (12) and (15), composed of grey brown sandy silt and hardcore. Overlying the area was concrete (11) measuring 0.15m thick on average.
- 7.11 No archaeological features were recorded in Trenches 3 to 8.

Trench 9

Table of the stratigraphic sequence

Context No	Depth	Height of Deposit (mOD)	Description/Interpretation
17	0.15m	6.33m – 6.18m	Concrete floor.
18	0.10m	6.18m – 6.08m	Loose grey brown sandy silt with hardcore. Make up.
19	1.00m+	6.08m – 5.08m	Orange sand and gravel. Natural.

- 7.12 Trench 9 was located in the north-eastern corner of the basement and was excavated as part of the new drainage system. The whole room was excavated measuring 4.20m x 3.80m.
- 7.13 The earliest deposit recorded in the trench was (19), a 1.00m+ layer of naturally lain sand and gravel. Banding was observed and can be seen in Plate 4 below. Overlying the gravel and sand was (18), a 0.10m thick grey silt with occasional hardcore inclusions. This post medieval deposit is likely to relate directly with the concrete floor or footings above and has been interpreted as a bedding layer. No dating evidence was observed. This was directly overlain or cut by (17), the footings of the current upstanding building and the overlying concrete floor.
- 7.14 No archaeological features were recorded in Trench 9.



Plate 4 – Trench 9

Trenches 10 & 11

Table of the stratigraphic sequence

Context No	Depth	Height of Deposit (mOD)	Description/Interpretation
20	0.10m	6.33m – 6.23m	Concrete floor.
21	0.18m	6.23m – 6.05m	Dark brown sandy silt gravel with hardcore. Make up.
22	0.50m	6.05m – 5.55m	Grey brown orange sand and gravel. Natural.
23	0.33m	5.55m – 5.22m	Mid brown gravel. Natural.
24	0.29m	5.22m+	Orange brown dense sandy gravels.

- 7.15 Trenches 10 and 11 were located in the northern area of the basement and excavated for the new lift pit and new drainage system. Trench 10 measured 1.50m x 1.35m, whilst Trench 11 measured 2.10m x 2.40m.
- 7.16 The earliest deposits recorded in the trenches were a series of natural gravel and sand layers recorded as (24), (23) and (22), measuring a total depth of 1.12m (Plate 6). Overlying the gravel was (21), a 0.18m thick layer of dark brown silt and hardcore rubble used as makeup for (26), a 0.80m thick layer of concrete overlaid by (25), a yellow stock brick wall forming the footings and upstanding wall of the current building (Plate 5). This area was previously used as the staircase which explains the requirement for such a thick concrete layer.
- 7.17 No archaeological features were recorded in Trenches 10 & 11.



Plate 5 & 6 – Trench 10 (upper) and Trench 11

8 Finds

- 8.1 No finds were recovered during the watching brief.

9 Conclusion

- 9.1 The archaeological watching brief was successful in identifying the presence/absence of archaeological remains on site. The monitoring identified a sequence of natural gravel and sand deposits on site, which demonstrated banding, indicating undisturbed naturally lain layers. No overlying subsoil's were recorded, suggesting it had been removed from site. The majority of features recorded in the trenches relate to the foundation of the current building. Only one possible pit was observed on site in Trench 1, which has been interpreted as post medieval and likely to relate to disturbance associated with the construction of the current building.
- 9.2 No finds or features of any earlier periods were observed on site, suggesting that the excavation and construction of the current basement has removed any potential archaeological remains on site.

10 Publication and Archive Deposition

- 10.1 Due to the nature of the investigation it is proposed that publication is limited to a summary in the London Archaeology Round-up and publication via the Archaeological Data Service (ADS) (Appendix B).
- 10.2 On completion of the project, the archive, consisting of paper records, drawings and digital photographs will be deposited with the LAARC.

11 Bibliography

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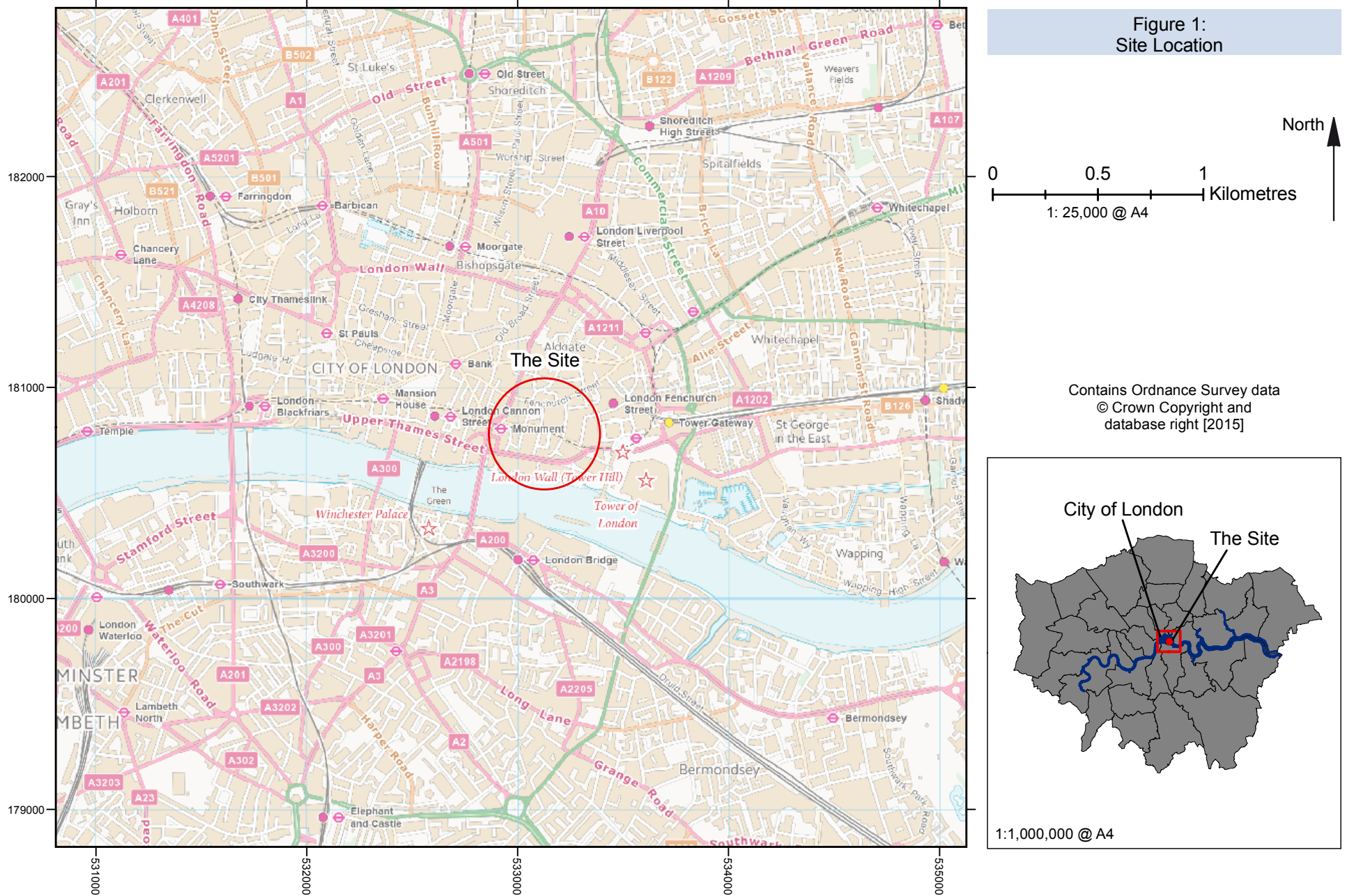
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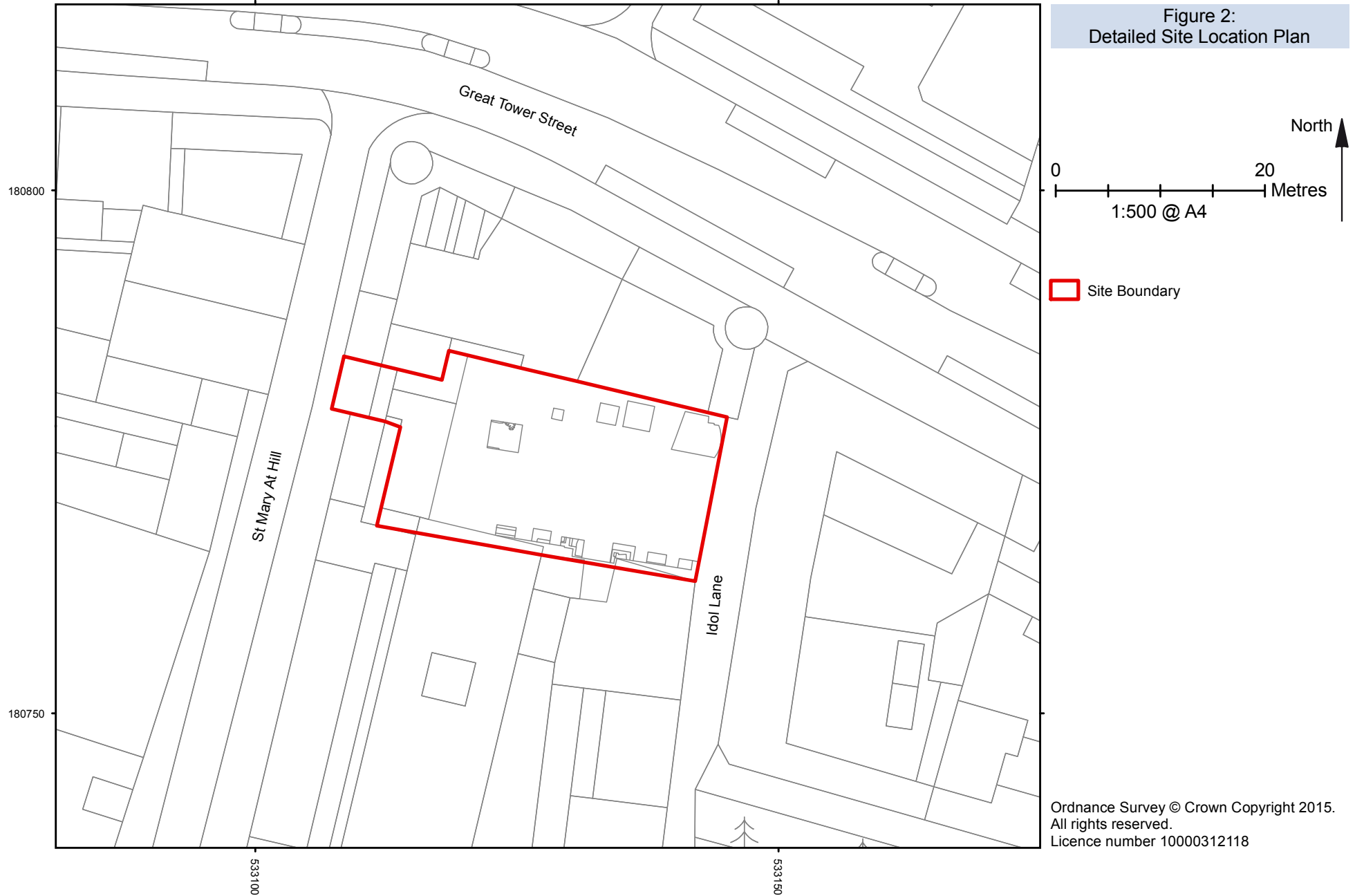
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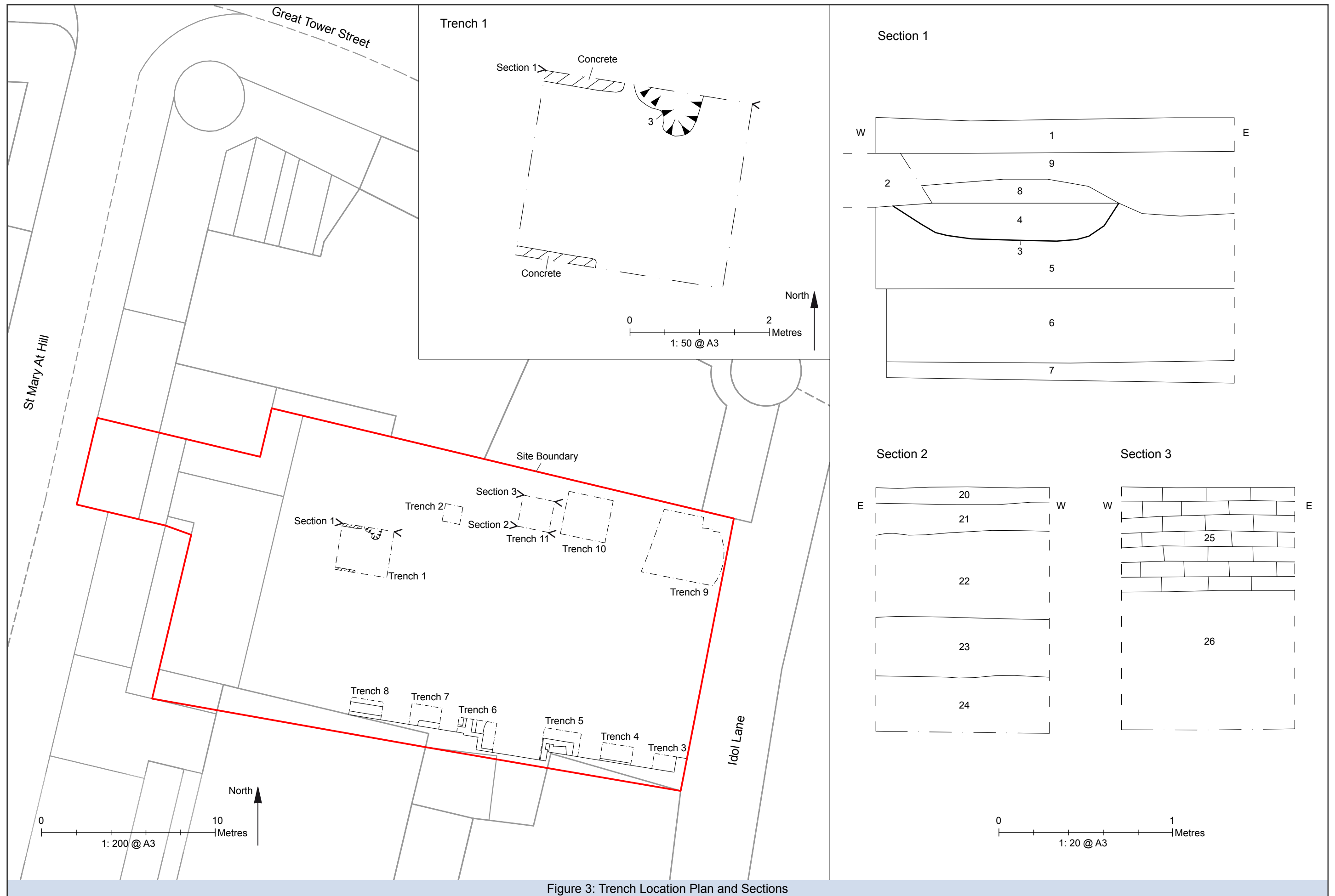


Figure 3: Trench Location Plan and Sections

Appendices

Appendix A – Context Register

Context No.	Context Description	Length	Width	Depth
1	Concrete.	3.00m	2.60m	0.20m
2	Hardcore rubble.	3.00m	2.60m	0.30m
3	Possible pit.	3.00m	2.60m	0.40m
4	Pit fill.	3.00m	2.60m	0.22m
5	Light brown, grey, orange sand and gravel.	3.00m	2.60m	0.52m
6	Orange and brown dense sand and gravel.	3.00m	2.60m	0.48m
7	Light brown and orange sand and gravel.	3.00m	2.60m	0.10m+
8	Pit fill.	3.00m	2.60m	0.18m
9	Grey brown clay silt. Made ground.	3.00m	2.60m	0.40m
10	Dark brown and orange gravel and sand.	1.50m	1.50m	0.25m+
11	Concrete floor.	Various	Various	0.15m
12	Loose grey brown sandy silt with hardcore. Make up.	Various	Various	0.65m
13	Yellow and Blue brick wall footing	Various	Various	-
14	Orange sand and gravel. Natural	Various	Various	1.00m
15	Loose grey brown sandy silt with hardcore. Make up.	Various	Various	0.60m
16	Construction Cut	Various	Various	1.00m
17	Concrete floor.	4.20m	3.80m	0.15m
18	Loose grey brown sandy silt with hardcore. Make up.	4.20m	3.80m	0.10m
19	Orange sand and gravel. Natural.	4.20m	3.80m	1.00m+
20	Concrete floor.	2.40m	2.10m	0.10m
21	Dark brown sandy silt gravel with hardcore. Make up.	2.40m	2.10m	0.18m
22	Grey brown orange sand and gravel. Natural.	2.40m	2.10m	0.50m
23	Mid brown gravel. Natural.	2.40m	2.10m	0.33m
24	Orange brown dense sandy gravels.	2.40m	2.10m	0.29m
25	Concrete	2.40m	2.10m	0.80m
26	Footings	2.40m	2.10m	-

Appendix B – Oasis Form

OASIS ID: aocarcha1-207670

Project details

Project name 2/4 Idol Lane

Short description of the project Watching brief on intrusive ground works

Project dates Start: 02-10-2014 End: 05-03-2015

Previous/future work Yes / Not known

Any associated project reference codes IDL14 - Sitecode

Any associated project reference codes 32668 - Contracting Unit No.

Type of project Recording project

Site status Conservation Area

Current Land use Other 2 - In use as a building

Monument type PIT Post Medieval

Investigation type "Watching Brief"

Prompt Planning condition

Project location

Country England

Site location GREATER LONDON CITY OF LONDON CITY OF LONDON 2/4
Idol Lane

Postcode EC3

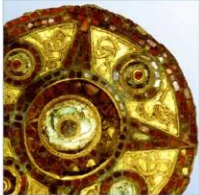
Site coordinates	TQ 33129 80775 51.5097222222 -0.0813888888889 51 30 35 N 000 04 53 W Point
Height OD / Depth	Min: 5.43m Max: 6.08m
Project creators	
Name of Organisation	AOC Archaeology Group
Project brief originator	RPS Planning
Project design originator	RPS
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Project director/manager	Catherine Edwards
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