



**5-11 WORSHIP STREET
ISLINGTON
LONDON EC2**

HISTORIC BUILDING RECORD AND PHOTOGRAPHIC SURVEY



Essex County Council

Field Archaeology Unit

Report 2359

September 2011

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HISTORIC BUILDING RECORD AND PHOTOGRAPHIC SURVEY

Client: Barker Associates

FAU Project No.: 2359

NGR: TQ 3280 8207

Planning Application: P101996

OASIS No.: 106096

Dates of Fieldwork: February & July 2011

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Essex County Council Field Archaeology Unit (ECC FAU) was commissioned by the architects, Barker Associates, to prepare a documentary record detailing the historic significance of the remains of two badly fire-damaged structures at Number 5 – 11 Worship Street, Islington, prior to demolition and rebuilding. The work was carried out in accordance with a planning decision notice issued by Islington Planning Services (P1010996), upon which an ECC FAU method statement was based (ECC FAU 2010).

Copies of the report will be supplied to Islington Planning Services and the Islington Local History Centre. The archive will be stored with the London Archaeological Archive Resource Centre (LAARC). An OASIS online record has been created at <http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/oasis/index.cfm>.

The two structures are located along Worship Street, one of several side roads on the east side of City Road, the Moorgate entrance into the City of London. Numbers (Nos.) 5-7 Worship Street represent a late 19th century industrial building, refurbished in 2002/3. Its neighbour, Nos. 9-11 dates from the 1950s but replaced a broadly contemporary industrial building to Nos 5 - 7 that was rebuilt following bomb damage during the Second World War. In recent times both buildings have been incorporated into a City bar, The Prophet, with offices on the floors above, and collectively renamed as Henry Thomas House. Though

neither is Listed, they form part of the historically and architecturally important Bunhill Fields and Finsbury Square Conservation Area.

2.0 BACKGROUND

2.1 Conservation Area

The Bunhill Fields & Finsbury Square Conservation Area (CA 22) was designated in 1987, extended in 1998 and again in 2002. It contains a number of historic buildings and open spaces including Wesley's Chapel and Finsbury Barracks, while Finsbury Square, the Artillery Grounds of the Honourable Artillery Company and Bunhill Fields, a former burial ground particularly associated with Non-Conformist and Dissenter burials since the 17th century, are all ancient open spaces. City Road and Tabernacle Street are lined with Victorian, Edwardian and more-modern buildings that are almost entirely commercial in origin/ nature and the area has a cohesive character of Edwardian grandeur and Victorian commercialism (Islington Borough Council 2011). Side roads off City Road, the main north-south road bisecting the Conservation Area, such as Worship Street have been highlighted for their contribution to the mainly late-Victorian and Edwardian commercial character, comprising primarily late Victorian warehouses and offices (Islington Borough Council 2011).

Discussions held by Barker Associates, architects for the project, with the Islington Borough Council Planning Department indicated that Nos 5 – 11, with its disjointed façade arising from the rebuilding of Nos 9 – 11 in the 1950's, was of little architectural merit and was regarded as being a neutral contributor to the special character of the Conservation Area, that is to say that while the existing buildings, pre-fire, did not detract from the character of the Conservation Area, they conversely added little to the overall character or significance of the area.

2.2 Site location and description

Worship Street is situated in the south-east corner of Islington, on the east side of City Road, just to the north of Finsbury Square (fig. 1). Much of the street was redeveloped in the 20th century as offices and there are few remaining buildings dating to before 1900 (plate 3). At the time of the survey the Nos 5 - 11 were supported by a scaffold frame and in the process of being stripped-out prior to demolition.

No. 5-7 Worship Street was built in the late Victorian period as commercial premises. Since that time it has been used for office, light industrial and warehousing purposes by several

businesses and more recently as a bar and offices. The Worship Street façade has been altered by inserting the new bar frontage, modern windows and an additional new floor and mansard roof. Despite such alterations, the building retains its historic character and some interesting architectural features.

No. 9-11 Worship Street is a 1950s reinforced concrete framed building of lesser architectural and historic interest, though it is built on the foundations of a late Victorian structure contemporary with Nos. 5-7. Latterly it also formed part of the modern bar and offices known as Henry Thomas House

Both buildings were irreparably damaged by the fire of March 2010, causing the upper floors to collapse and the basement to flood. Subsequently their poor structural condition means that retention is impractical.

2.3 Planning background

Proposals for demolition of Nos. 5-11 and rebuilding as a single five-storey structure were submitted in August 2010 (planning ref. P101996). The plans are based on previous usage, comprising a bar on the ground floor and basement, office accommodation on the first to fourth floor, and residential usage on the fifth. The plans include retaining the existing basement slab. Conservation Area Consent for demolition was granted by Islington Council in October 2010, subject to the following condition:

No demolition works shall be undertaken on the site unless and until a recording of the historical significance and photographic record of the existing building(s) has been submitted and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

3.0 OBJECTIVES

The main objective of the recording work was to make a basic descriptive and photographic record of the structures and to provide background historical research in order to document the buildings and understand their historic importance within the local environs.

To demonstrate this, the record was required to investigate the following:

- Historical photographs

- Historical and recent drawings, map evidence and written records that record the historic development of the site
- Any artefacts and/or samples or environmental evidence found during assessment and demolition
- Assessment and analysis of the results and proposals for their publication and dissemination, if relevant.

4.0 HISTORICAL RESEARCH

Cartographic and documentary research was undertaken at the Islington Local History Centre and the London Metropolitan Archives to gain information on the history and development of the site. Mainly this was in the form of historic Ordnance Survey maps (OS) and Trades Directories, though only a selection of maps have been reproduced in this report as the condition of some is poor or else they lack sufficient detail to be of use. Photographs of the bar before the fire were taken from the website www.restaurantvoucherslive.co.uk. No earlier photographs were found. The results are presented below with accompanying references.

4.1 Pre-19th century origins

Worship Street originated as a lane that took its name from John Worsop, an Elizabethan timber merchant who held land adjacent to it in 1567 (Babbington 1972). John Gillum purchased land here in 1745 and the area to the rear became known as Gillum's Fields (The Builder magazine, August 1863).

4.2 19th Century

According to the 1851 City Map, the western end of Worship Road containing Nos. 5-11 was known as 'Providence Row' up to the junction with Paul Street and Wilson Street. By the 1870s (1873 Ordnance Survey map, fig. 2), Providence Row had been integrated into Worship Street. The map shows a row of 6 or 7 terraced properties between Nos. 3 and 15 Worship Street and police courts to the rear (fig. 2). The inclusion of these properties in late 19th century trades directories suggests these were tenemented commercial properties perhaps similar to those at Nos. 91-101 at the opposite end of the street, in Hackney Borough, which are some of the few buildings to survive from this era and are Grade II*-Listed (National Heritage List no. 1235558). Designed by Philip Webb and built in 1861, these are three storey (with attic) houses with ground floor shopfronts (fig. 3).

The Post Office London Directory of 1882 records the following business persons occupying Nos. 5-11 in that year:

No. 5: John Wells Chapman, bonnet maker

No. 7: Horace Montague Ogle, solicitor & John Thomas Jones, undertaker

No. 9: Matthew Omant, linen-drapeer

No. 11: Mrs Emma George, mourning flower maker

By the early 1890s, the existing Nos. 5-7 have been rebuilt as one structure, completely replacing the two old terraces. Kelly's Trades Directory of 1893 records that it is occupied by a publishing firm, Joseph Boulton & Co. Ltd. Since there is no commercial entry for Nos. 9 and 11, it is possible the two tenements from the 1870s map were still standing or that redevelopment was underway. The street was clearly becoming more commercialised in nature at this time, with a number of larger inter-connecting businesses mainly in the paper and furniture trades established, including printers, bookbinders, cabinet makers, upholsterers and paper and card manufacturers.

By 1896 Nos. 9-11 had been demolished and redeveloped as a single block, as had Nos. 1-3 and 13-15, forming four commercial blocks (fig. 4). It is interesting to note that the basic ground plan/ outline formed by Nos. 5-11 has not changed since.

4.3 20th Century - present day

The Post Office London Directory of 1909 records another firm, Dorendorff & Co. Christmas card publishers occupying nos. 5-7, with Reynolds & Co. cabinet makers occupying Nos. 9-11.

During the mid-1910s and early 1920s there was no commercial activity in Nos. 5-7, perhaps as a consequence of the First World War, while, Nos. 9-11 was occupied by Mosely Bros., Manufacturing Agents, and Berliner & Co., glove manufacturers, occupied the neighbouring no. 13. (Post Office London Directory, 1921)

By the mid-1920s production had resumed at Nos. 5-7 with the expansion of the Express Rubber Company, manufacturers of waterproof clothing, who initially had premises at Nos. 1-3. However, by 1930 Nos. 1-7 were being used as warehouses by Ardath Tobacco Co. Ltd, tobacco manufacturers (Post Office London Directory, 1930).

Nos. 13 and 15 were destroyed during a World War II bombing raid that caused damage to 9-11, which led to its subsequent demolition and rebuilding in the 1950s, over the old 1890s basement. Figure 4, used to record the extent of bomb damage in the city, shows Nos. 13 and 15 in black (destroyed) and nos. 9-11 in orange (general blast damage, minor in nature). Purple, which occurs quite often in this area, indicates damage beyond repair, while yellow is minor blast damage.

After WW II, Nos. 1-7 continued to be used for tobacco warehousing by Ardath Tobacco, who manufactured Sobrane cocktail cigarettes from No. 17 (Post Office London Directory, 1960).

In more recent years Nos. 5-11 were known as Viking House, occupied by Viking Husqvarna Ltd, manufacturers of chain saws, trial bikes, etc, and presumably used as their central office, while other tenants included Roston Carr Ltd, tie manufacturers (Post Office London Directory, 1975).

Nos. 5-7 and 9-11 were combined above the second floor by removing the central wall and in 2002/03 both buildings were refurbished. As part of this, a new floor was inserted above Nos. 5-7 and the separate roofs replaced with a new, single mansard roof (Barker Associates 2010). One night in March 2010 a fire started in a nightclub in Tabernacle Street and spread to 5-11 Worship Street causing irreparable damage to both properties.

5.0 DESCRIPTION OF WORKS

Documentary and cartographic research was undertaken to investigate the origins and development of the buildings proposed for demolition. Collections at the Islington Local History Centre and the London Metropolitan Archives were studied and maps reproduced in the report as figures 2-4. Pictures of the bar and its interior are included on the cover and in plates 1 and 2.

Floor plans and elevations were supplied by the architects. Site visits were made during stripping-out works prior to demolition but due to the instability of the floors and other health and safety issues, internal access was restricted to the basement and ground floor only. During the survey the Worship Street façade was largely hidden from view by scaffolding. All external recording above the first floor was carried out from the scaffold. The rear elevation

was not viewed but post-fire photographs from the architects are included with the report plates.

Digital photographs were taken externally and internally. General elevation photographs were constrained by the scaffolding but specific shots were taken of interesting features or architectural detail. Internal shots above basement and ground floor were limited in scope by working conditions. A representative selection is reproduced at the back of the report as plates 3-20. The remainder can be found in the archive.

6.0 BUILDING DESCRIPTIONS

6.1 5-7 Worship Street

Number 5-7 Worship Street is described as a 'light industrial' structure in the Heritage Statement (Barker Associates 2010) and as its history suggests, is clearly an adaptable building. It was constructed in the late 19th century (between 1873 and 1893) and its initial use appears to have been by a publishing company as offices, then for manufacturing waterproof clothing in the early 20th century (with Nos. 1-3 also), followed by tobacco warehousing and then finally offices.

In construction terms, it is brick-built on a steel/cast iron frame, originally over five storeys including a basement, but now over six. The main elevations to south and north remain largely unaltered, but the original roof form is unknown since it was replaced in 2002/3. Based upon similar industrial buildings of the period it is likely to have been either pitched or mansard in form and built over a timber frame. Internally, the floors, much damaged during the fire, are laid on timber joists attached to the iron frame.

6.1.1 External description

The main Worship Street façade is covered in scaffold (plate 4). Although difficult to see it is built in pier and panel construction on four broadly identical levels, apart from the ground floor whose original form was altered when the bar was created.

At ground level (plate 5) there are three square limestone piers, the outer two of which terminate in projecting Classical-style corbels (plate 1). The corbels have scrollwork decoration and connect to a narrow moulded band (plate 6). Such features are common to the late 19th/early 20th century shops and businesses along City Road (plate 7), but tend not to have survived along Worship Street. Otherwise, the façade on this level is modern, though

the doorway on the west side that leads to the basement, ground floor and stairs up to Henry Thomas House is in its original place. As a utility building over several levels, it can be surmised the original ground floor frontage broadly replicated the upper floors.

The piers continue from first to third floor in English bonded red brick, with contrasting panels of Flemish bonded yellow stock brick between. Large modern windows are inserted within the panels that sit within original apertures, with codestone sills and iron lintels representing the frame. Above the lintels on the first and second floors are long terracotta floral friezes between the piers (plate 8). Again, similar features can be seen on buildings along City Road and form part of the character of the Conservation Area.

The late 19th century structure finished on the third floor with moulded limestone capitals to the piers at sill height and a moulded cornice above (plate 9), the height of the original roof. In the modern build above, the pier and panel form is continued in modern yellow and red bricks onto the fourth floor and mansard roof (plate 10) but neither displays any features architectural interest.

The rear (north) elevation was not viewed in the survey but photographs supplied by the architects show a simpler form built entirely of yellow stock bricks on four levels, with three windows per floor (plate 11). Part of the outline of the original roof can also be seen in plate 11 below the modern Mansard roof.

6.1.2 Internal description

In the circumstances, only the basement and ground floor were properly viewed, but photographs are included of the upper floors, which provide a good indication of the damage caused by the fire.

The basement is entered by steps beside the main entrance. Originally this level was divided into two bays by a heavy iron joist frame but since the fire a steel frame has been added, to support the floor above (plate 12). Exposed late 19th century brickwork was observed in the dividing wall between nos. 7 and 9, laid in English bond, which was often used in industrial buildings for its strength. Beneath the stairs is a storage area, retaining an original doorway (plate 13), inside which is an old plaque on the south wall that reads 'Providence Row 17' (plate 14). The location of the plaque and its stainless steel frame indicate it was fitted to the wall in the modern period, perhaps as a feature of the bar, although it was potentially salvaged from one of the earlier buildings on the site or elsewhere along the street after Providence Row was renamed Worship Street.

The rear of the ground floor is covered by the drop zone for debris and fire-damaged material from the upper floors (plate 15) and was not accessible. The east wall of the building contains yellow and red stock bricks in a crude form of English bond. All doorways between this and No. 9, where the bar finished, have concrete or steel lintels, dating either to when the buildings were amalgamated or when the bar was created.

The floors above were viewed either from the stairs or scaffold and were covered in fire debris and a jumble of office equipment, furniture, etc.

6.2 9-11 Worship Street

9-11 Worship Street was rebuilt in the 1950s to replace a bomb-damaged late Victorian industrial building, built soon after 5-7 in the 1890s and likely to have been of similar construction and design. Since refurbishment in the early 2000's, the basement and ground floor of No. 9 was part of the bar while the storeys above formed part of Henry Thomas House, whose main entrance was at the front of no. 11. Like its neighbour, the façade was covered in scaffold during the survey (plate 16).

6.2.1 External description

The structure is built on a reinforced concrete frame. Apart from the modern glazing and entrances on the ground floor Worship Street façade (plate 17) each level up to the fourth floor is characterised by wide modern office windows (probably fitted in 2002/3 with those next door), with blue panels in between (plate 16). The only exception is the stair bay to No. 11 which is glazed above the main entrance, up to the top floor.

The rear and side walls are built of brick (plate 11), part of which to the back at least, incorporates late 19th century brickwork.

6.2.2 Internal description

The basement of No. 9 previously housed toilets which had been stripped out before the survey, leaving the bare cast concrete frame, concrete floor and concrete block lift shaft (plate 18). At this level the rear wall is built of old red and yellow stock bricks in the same random English bond form as the wall between the two buildings (plate 19), but it is unclear how far this extends to ground level. There is a straight joint between the two buildings, confirming their different construction dates, though it is likely they were built not long after each other.

The interior retains no notable features on the ground floor or levels above (plate 20).

7.0 ASSESSMENT

Number 5-7 Worship Street was constructed in the late 19th century at a time when larger, more industrialised businesses were replacing smaller firms that had previously provided local services and hand-made products. Through demand for such premises, Nos. 5-11 and the other tenements/shops nearby were redeveloped into larger business units in the last decade of the 19th century.

The form of Nos. 5-7 is typical to contemporary industrial structures in its use of pier and panel construction over a multi-floor steel/cast iron frame. Contrasting red and yellow brickwork is used to emphasise the form.

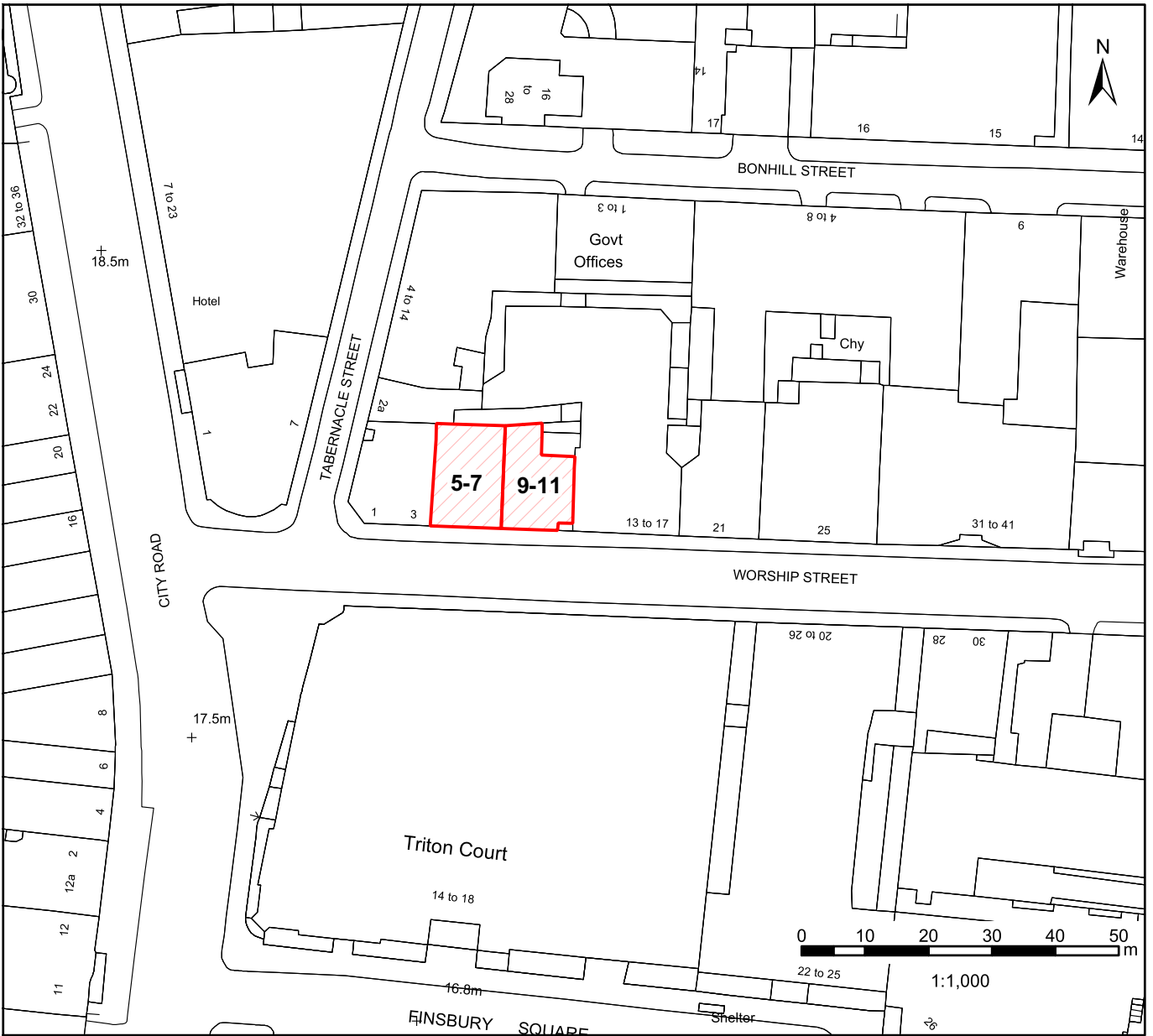
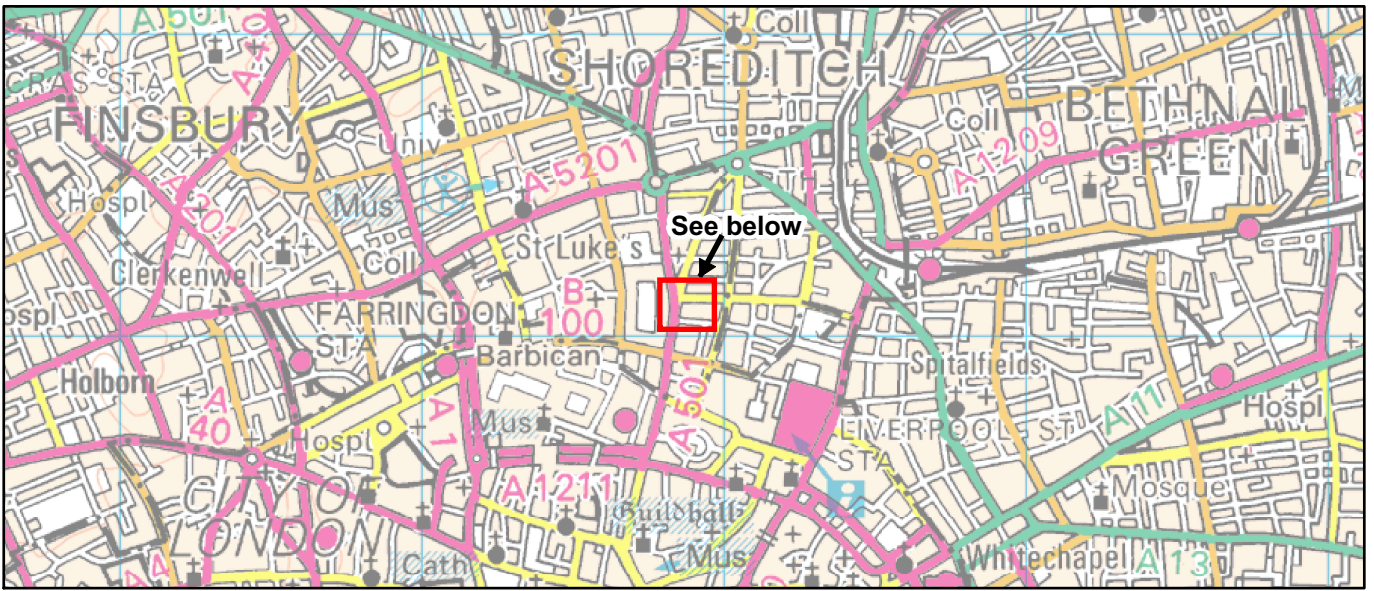
Although a functional building, the façade displays features of architectural interest, the most noticeable of which are the stone corbels either side, which are common feature of Victorian shopfronts. Less obvious behind the scaffold are the bands of terracotta tiling between the floors, which are a good feature. Both elements are likely to have been common themes to other buildings along Worship Street that have since disappeared, but are still reflected in the streetscape of City Road and the Conservation Area in general.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thanks are due to William Bidewell of the architects, Barker Associates, for commissioning the works and for supplying drawings used in the survey. Thanks also to Tom O'Dowd, site foreman for KDC Demolition, for his interest and cooperation. The assistance of staff at the Islington Local History Centre and the London Metropolitan Archives is also gratefully acknowledged. Fieldwork, recording and photography were undertaken by the author. Illustrations were prepared by the author and produced by Andrew Lewsey. The project was managed and monitored by Adrian Scruby of ECC FAU, on behalf of the Local Planning Authority.

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Fig.1. Site location

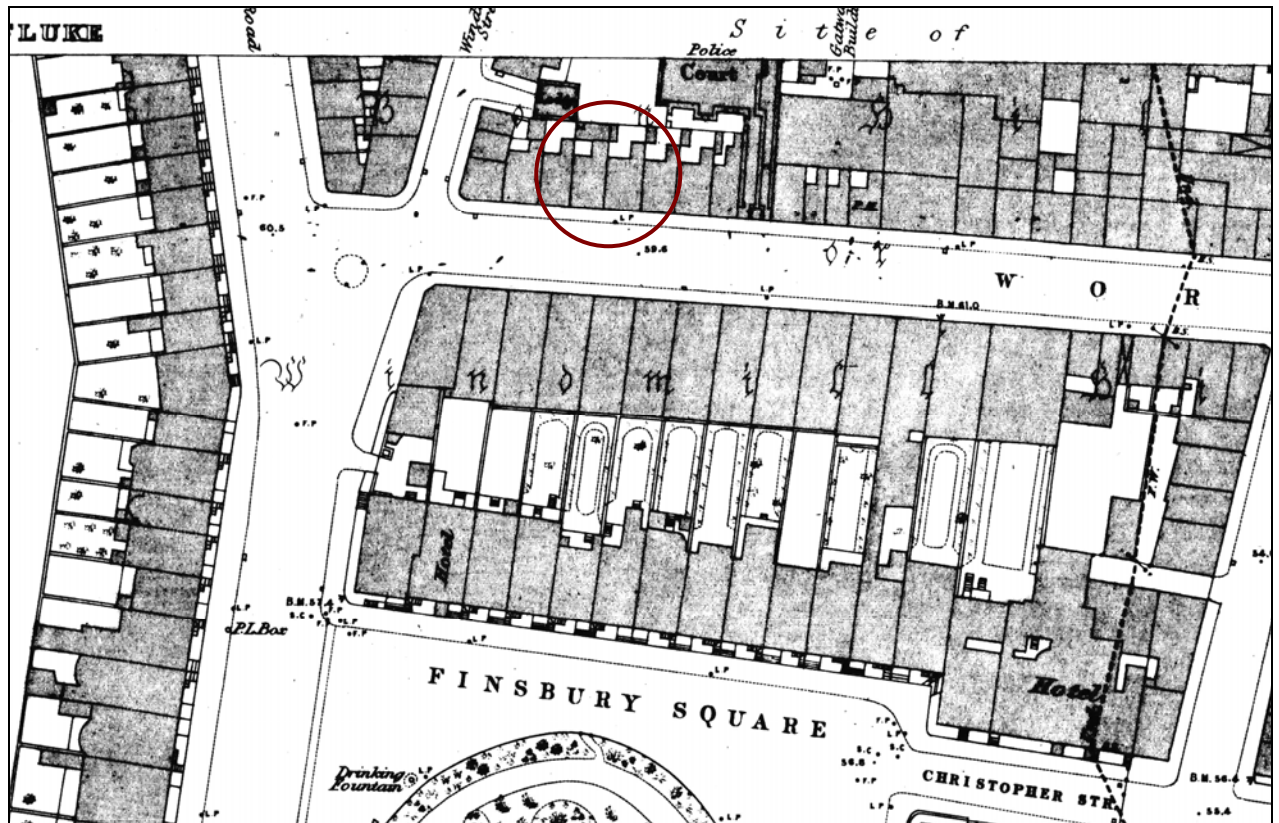


Fig. 2 First edition 1873 OS map (sheet 36/56)



Fig. 3 91-101 Worship Street, built in 1861

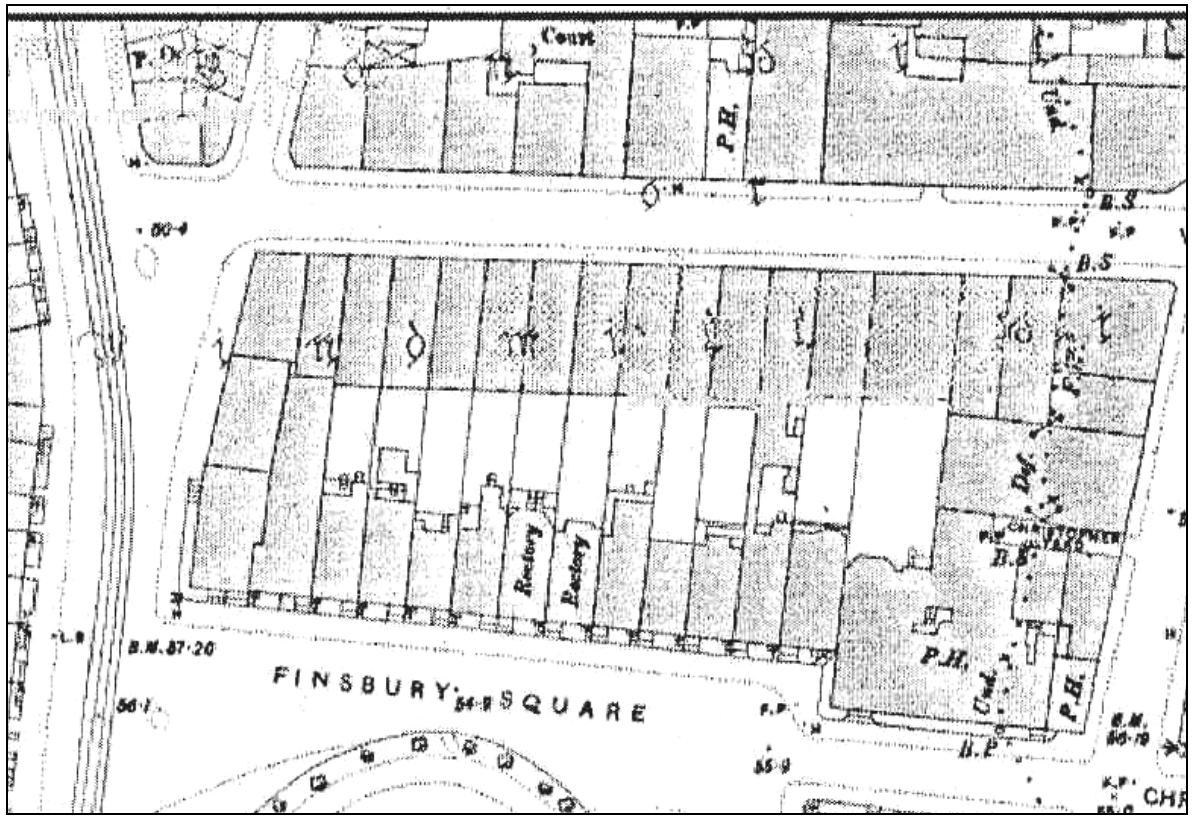


Fig. 4 Town Plan of London, 1896



Fig. 5 Survey of London for bomb damage, based on 1916 OS map (RM 22/63)



Plate 1: Nos. 5-7 viewed externally before the fire (www.restaurantvoucherslive.co.uk)



Plate 2: Internal views of The Prophet, pre-fire
(www.restaurantvoucherslive.co.uk)



Plate 3 View along Worship Street to nos. 5-11 (west)



Plate 4 Scaffold across facade



Plate 5 Bar frontage



Plate 6 Detail of corbel on west side



Plate 7 Similar corbels seen on City Road buildings



Plate 8 Terracotta frieze



Plate 9 Cornice to original roofline



Plate 10 Modern roof viewed to east



Plate 11 Fire-damage rear elevation viewed to south-west



Plate 12 Basement under nos. 5-7 viewed to south-west



Plate 13 Storage area under stairs



Plate 14 'Providence Row' plaque in basement



Plate 15 First floor of nos. 5-7 (bar) viewed to east (nos. 9-11)



Plate 16 9-11 under scaffold



Plate 17 Ground floor frontage of nos. 9-11



Plate 18 Basement of nos. 9-11 viewed to north (former toilets)



Plate 19 Historic east wall of nos. 5-7 and rear (north) wall of nos. 9-11 viewed in basement



Plate 19 Upper floor of nos. 9-11