

**ST MARY-AT-HILL, LOVAT LANE,
CITY OF LONDON EC3R 8EE**

An Archaeological Watching Brief



April 2017

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CITY OF LONDON EC3R 8EE

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Site code: MHL16

Approximate site centre: NGR TQ 33084 80776

COMPASS ARCHAEOLOGY LIMITED
250 YORK ROAD
LONDON SW11 3SJ

Tel: 020 7801 9444

e-mail: mail@compassarchaeology.co.uk

Author: Heidi Archer

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Abstract

On the 3rd April 2017 Compass Archaeology conducted an archaeological watching brief in the churchyard of St Mary-at-Hill, City of London EC3R 8EE. The watching brief was carried out as part of an ongoing programme of enhancement works to the public space, commissioned by the City of London Department of the Built Environment (planning reference: 16/00751/FULL).

Three pits, 5, 6 & 8, were completed in order to establish the presence of an existing water pipe running approximately northeast-southwest through the site. The first pit, measuring 0.6 x 0.65 x 0.3m was located on the perimeter path adjacent to the rear entrance to the church. The second pit, measuring 1.03 x 0.64 x 0.54-0.7m was located at the southwestern corner of the raised area, immediately west of a Compass Evaluation trench (Trench 4) completed in 2016. The final pit measured 1m x 0.9m x 0.5m in depth, was located west of the eastern entrance gate, leading out towards St Mary-at-Hill.

The stratigraphy in the three pits comprised post-medieval backfill surrounding the water pipe (present in Pits 5 and 6 only) below the existing paving slabs. No finds or features of archaeological interest were recorded.

These groundworks formed a stage of the ongoing enhancement works. The remainder of the works will be subject to a programme of archaeological investigation, with an additional report produced upon completion.

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1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This document forms a summary of the results of an archaeological watching brief conducted in the churchyard of St Mary-at-Hill, City of London EC3R 8EE by Compass Archaeology on April 3rd 2017 (fig.1).

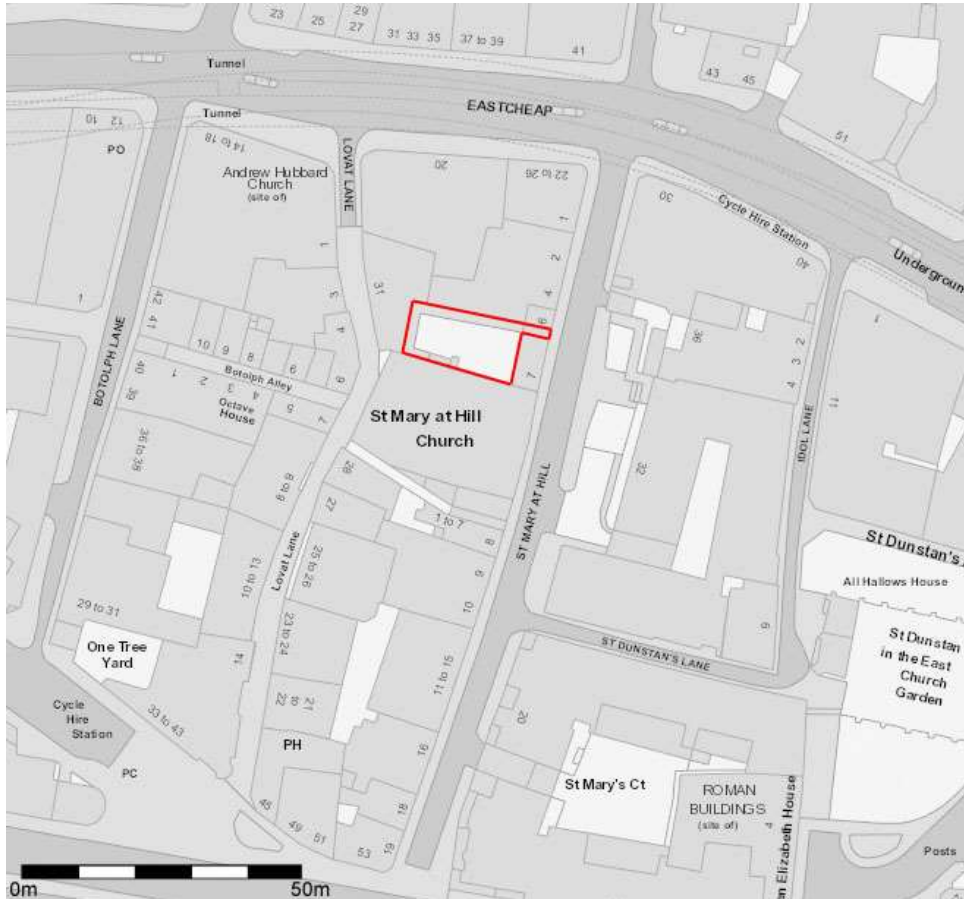


Figure 1: Site location (St Mary-at-Hill churchyard outlined in red)

- 1.2 The watching brief was commissioned by Kathryn Stubbs, City of London Assistant Director Historic Environment on behalf of the Department of the Built Environment, as part of the ongoing enhancement works to the public space.
- 1.3 The site lies in an Area of Archaeological Potential as designated by the City of London, and within the Eastcheap Conservation Area (see fig.2). The Church itself is a listed Grade I building. Groundworks were undertaken in accordance with the conditions of planning application 16/00751/FULL.
- 1.4 The programme of archaeological works entailed the monitoring of the completion of 3 trial holes undertaken in the perimeter path of the churchyard to establish the presence of an existing water pipe.

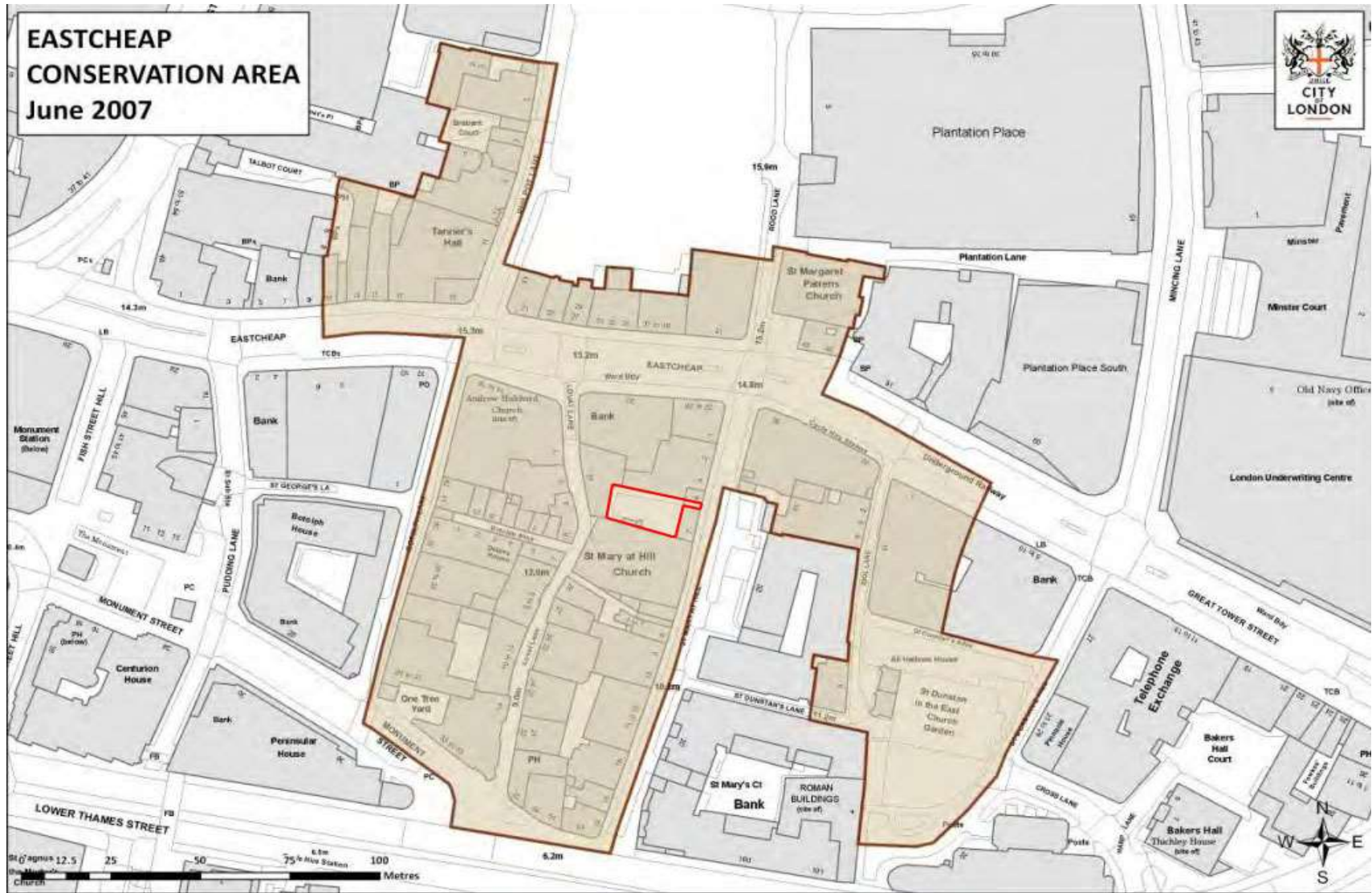


Figure 2: Map showing the extent of the Eastcheap conservation area (shaded in light brown) with the location of the St Mary-at-Hill churchyard outlined in red

2 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

2.1 Compass Archaeology would like to thank Kathryn Stubbs for commissioning Compass to undertake the archaeological watching brief and also to JB Riney and Co. Ltd for ensuring accessibility and support on site during their groundworks.

3 SITE LOCATION, GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY

3.1 The churchyard is approximately centred at NGR TQ 33084 80776, situated between St Mary-at-Hill and Lovat Lane. It lies some 250m north of the River Thames, on a step south-facing slope (the central area at c14.3mOD).

3.2 According to the British Geological Survey (Sheet 256 *North London*) the site overlies Taplow Gravels, bounded to the south by alluvium which follows the course of the Thames (fig.3).

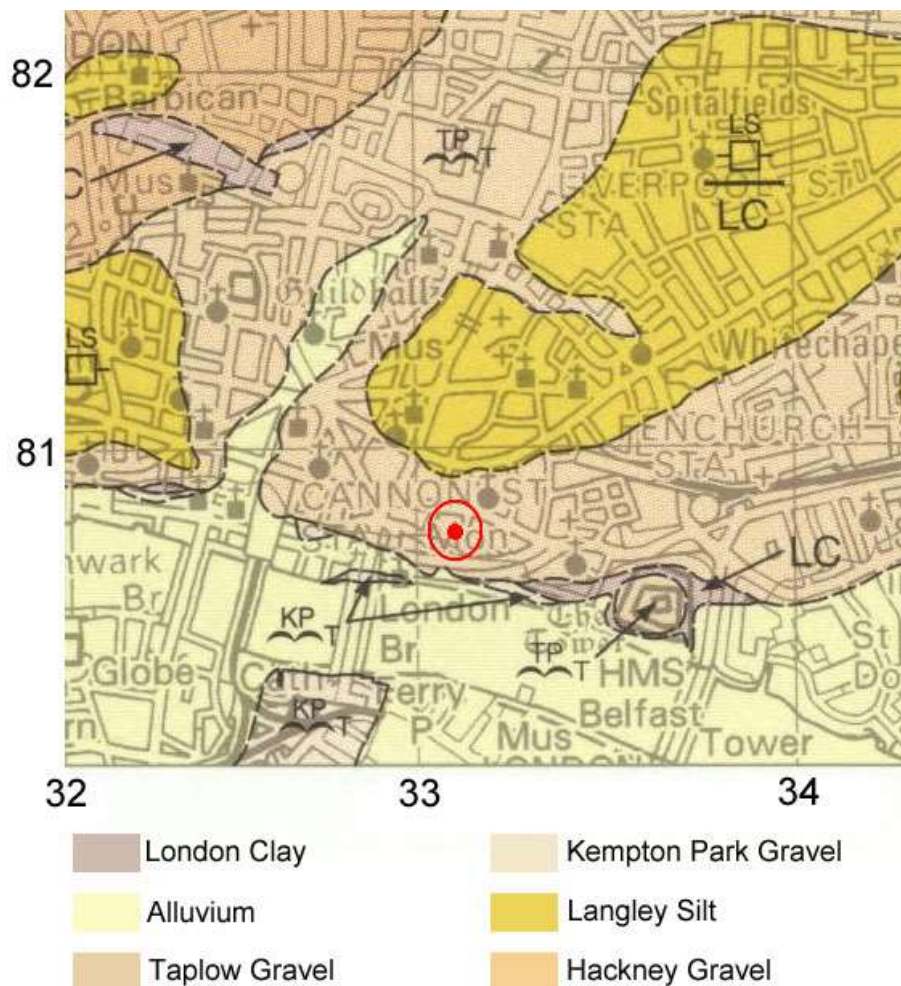


Figure 3: Extract from the British Geological Survey with site location marked in red

4 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORIC BACKGROUND

The archaeological and historic background of the site has been extensively laid out in previous documents associated with the improvement works to the public space (see Compass Archaeology WSI 2015; 2017 and Evaluation Report 2016) so shall not be reproduced at length here. Instead, a short summary of the previous archaeological investigations on the site shall be included.

4.1 MoLAS Investigations SMY88

4.1.1 During restoration work in 1988 after a fire an extensive standing building survey and archaeological investigation were conducted by the Museum of London. The archaeological work comprised 8 trenches located down the north and south aisles of the church and an additional watching brief on 3 boreholes. The work was carried out between 1989 and 1991, supervised by Bruce Watson.

The 8 trenches located down the north and south aisles exposed approximately 3m of stratigraphy. This consisted primarily of masonry elements dating to the Wren church and post-medieval brick burial vaults. The layers were mainly interpreted as burial clearance fills, with a possible Romano-British floor layer occurring at 11.99-11.83mOD in trench 8 (located in the north-east corner). The earliest context was a short length of a shallow U-shaped linear feature aligned east-west, containing a centrally placed post.

Several burials and burial vaults were observed during the excavation. Four incomplete, truncated burials were discovered under the foundations of the south transept. Two of the graves were lined with chalk and one with a mixture of wood ash and chalk. The date of the burials is unclear however as they were found c2m below the late medieval floor level they are thought to be associated with a pre-13th century church.

Burial vaults located in the centre of the church and in the south-east corner were extensively recorded. The bases of the features varied in depth between 13.32mOD in the south aisle, to 11.31mOD in the west vault, to 10.48mOD in the central vault. Vault number 14 (located in trench 4 in the south-east corner of the church) is believed to date from 1670-74, whilst the larger central vault dates from c1715.

4.1.2 The third borehole was located within the churchyard and as such the stratigraphy is comparable with that recorded during the 2016 trial pits. The stratigraphic sequence recorded in the borehole consisted of the following: 0.06m of York paving (top 13.67mOD) above 1.99m of dark greyish brown silt/fine sand/clay, containing frequent fragments of human bone, burnt daub and ceramic building material; 0.14m of orange-brown sand and gravel, redeposited natural; 0.44m of mixed grey-brown silt-sand with frequent charcoal flecks and oyster shells; finally 0.34m of mottled and cleaner brickearth above natural sand and gravels (10.66mOD).

The upper 2.2m are consistent with post-medieval, potentially medieval, backfills associated with the burial ground and subsequent clearance. The layer containing oyster

shells encountered at a depth of 2.21m (11.46mOD) was interpreted as a series of intercutting pits, possibly Romano -British in date.

4.2 Compass Archaeology SMS16

4.2.1 Four trial pits were completed in January 2016, measuring approximately 2.0m x 2.0m to a depth of between 0.8m and 1.2m. Three were located parallel to the existing east-west churchyard wall, with a fourth situated to the south, adjacent to the current boiler room. All four trial pits uncovered a dark brown-grey silt layer consistent with post-medieval graveyard fills, moderately abundant with ceramic building material fragments. Disarticulated human remains were recovered, not *in situ*, taken to be leftover material from a previous clearance of the burial ground.

A brick structure measuring 1.8m in length x 0.5m in width x 0.8m in height was uncovered at a depth of 0.3m (13.90mOD) in pit 1, with a base at 12.93mOD. The northern edge was originally keyed into the lower part of the existing wall, although due to subsidence there is a significant degree of displacement. Part of the wall was reconstructed in 1873 and this feature presumably dates from this period although its function is unknown. No other associated features were uncovered. A modern brick drain was uncovered at a depth of 0.35m (13.90mOD) in the north-west corner of pit 4.

Excavations in pit 3 revealed the foundations of the current wall. The structure comprises a red brick wall, supported by arches, with a maximum depth of 2.05m (12.25mOD), below a course of repair work, on top of which has been built a yellow stock brick wall finished with stone coping.

Artefactual evidence includes ceramic building material, pottery, bone, glass and clay pipe. The material dates from the Roman to the post-medieval period and was primarily recovered from the main silty fill.

Based on this, it is understood that the churchyard consists of disturbed post-medieval made ground, possibly partially imported from elsewhere, to create the raised level which can be seen today.

5 PLANNING AND OBJECTIVES

5.1 The works were undertaken as part of the ongoing enhancement works to the public space, the need for which was alluded to in the Eastcheap Conservation Area SPD and the Fenchurch & Monument Area Strategy (2013).

5.2 The programme of archaeological works was carried out as a condition of planning application 16/00751/FULL:

4 No works 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 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 policy of the Local Plan: DM12.4

- 5.3** Relevant to the groundworks are *Policy CS12: Historic Environment* in the City of London's Core Strategy (adopted September 2011) and *Policy DM12.4* in the City of London's Local Plan, set out below:

Policy DM 12.4 Ancient monuments and archaeology

- 1. To require planning applications which involve excavation or ground works on sites of archaeological potential to be accompanied by an archaeological assessment and evaluation of the site, including the impact of the proposed development.*
- 2. To preserve, protect, safeguard and enhance archaeological monuments, remains and their settings in development, and to seek a public display and interpretation, where appropriate.*
- 3. To require proper investigation and recording of archaeological remains as an integral part of a development programme, and publication and archiving of results to advance understanding.*

- 5.4** The programme of archaeological works entailed the monitoring of three trial pits located within the perimeter path and raised area of the churchyard, undertaken to expose and record an existing water pipe (fig.4). Although shown below Pit 7 was not undertaken.

- 5.5** The groundworks were undertaken by hand, with each pit being reinstated after its completion.

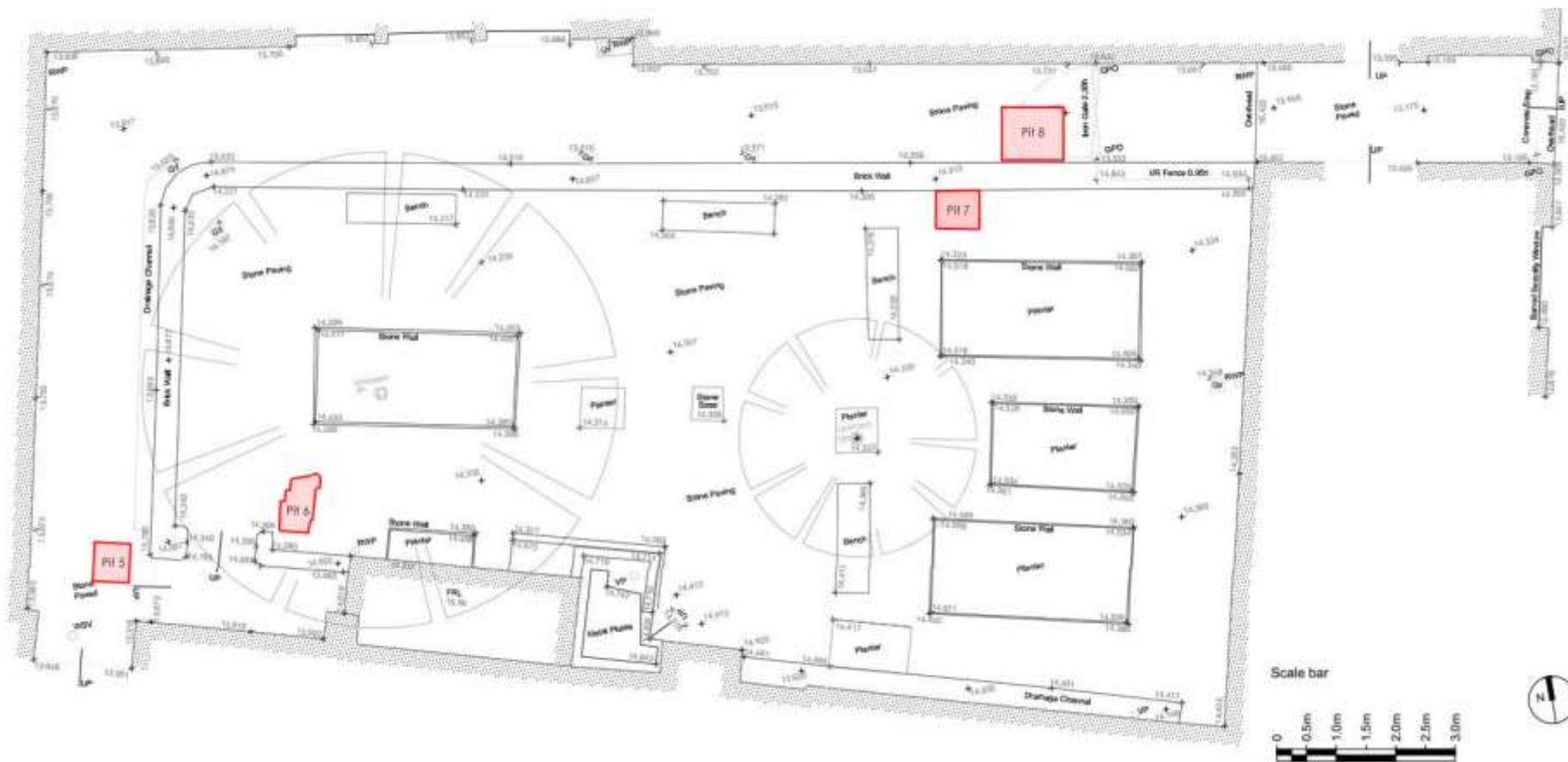


Figure 4: Location of 3 pits undertaken in the churchyard. Adapted from City of London drawing no. 15-058-002 supplied by the Client.

6 METHODOLOGY

6.1 Standards

6.1.1 The field and post-excavation work was carried out in accordance with Historic England guidelines (*Greater London Archaeology Advisory Service: Standards for Archaeological Work, 2015*). Works also conformed to the standards of the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (*Standard and guidance for archaeological field evaluation, 2014*). Overall management of the project was undertaken by a full member of the Chartered Institute.

6.1.2 Fieldwork was carried out in accordance with the Construction (Health, Safety & Welfare) Regulations. All members of the fieldwork team held valid CSCS (Construction Skills Certificate Scheme) cards, and wore hi-vis jackets, hard-hats, steel-toe-capped boots, etc., as required. All members of the fieldwork team also followed the contractors' health and safety guidelines.

6.1.3 The City of London were kept informed of the progress of fieldwork and any finds recovered.

6.2 Fieldwork

6.2.1 Archaeological contexts were recorded as appropriate on *pro-forma* sheets by written and measured description, and drawn in plan or section, generally at scales of 1:10 or 1:20. The investigations were recorded on a general site plan and related to the Ordnance Survey grid. The fieldwork record was supplemented by digital photography, in .jpeg and RAW formats.

6.2.2 The recording system followed the procedures set out in the Museum of London recording manual. By agreement the recording and drawing sheets used are directly compatible with those developed by the Museum.

6.3 Post-excavation

The fieldwork was followed by off-site assessment and compilation of a report, and by ordering and deposition of the site archive.

6.4 Report procedure

6.4.1 This report contains a description of the fieldwork plus details of any archaeological remains or finds, and an interpretation of the associated deposits. Illustrations have been included as appropriate, including a site plan located to the OS grid. A short summary of the project has been appended using the OASIS Data Collection Form.

6.4.2 Copies of this report will be supplied to the Client and Historic England.

6.4.3 A more comprehensive report shall be produced upon completion of the watching brief being undertaken throughout the programme of enhancement works. Any changes to this programme would need to be discussed and agreed with the Client.

6.5 The site archive

Once the programme of archaeological works has been completed, an ordered indexed and internally consistent archive of the evaluation will be compiled in line with MoL Guidelines for the Preparation of Archaeological Archives, and will be deposited in the Museum of London Archaeological Archive under site code MHL16. The integrity of the site archive should be maintained, and the landowner will be urged to donate any archaeological finds to the Museum.

7 RESULTS

The following forms a written description of observations made during the watching brief. See below for a plan of the observed works. Deposits are shown in as (x), cuts and structures as [x]. The text is supplemented with illustrative photographs. For a full context list refer to Appendix I.

7.1 Pit 5

- 7.1.1** The first pit was located adjacent to the rear door of the church, butting up against the north-south inner churchyard wall and steps, leading to the raised area. The pit measured 0.6m in length x 0.65m in length x 0.3m in depth (fig.5).



Figure 5: Pit 5, showing post-medieval backfill below the existing paved surface and water pipe. Facing N, scale 0.5m.

- 7.1.2** The stratigraphy comprised 250mm of dark brown soil containing frequent small stones and fragment of orange-red brick (31) below the existing stone paving slabs and bedding [30], measuring approximately 40-50mm in thickness.
- 7.1.3** The targeted water pipe was observed running in a northeast-southwest alignment through the centre of the trench, at a depth of 0.2m below ground level (13.650mOD at the south end and 13.566mOD at the north end).
- 7.1.4** Remains of some orange-red brickwork were noted in the east and west sections, however, it was unclear as to whether this had been a feature truncated by the installation of the pipe, or brick rubble within the backfill. No further features of archaeological interest were recorded and no finds were recovered.

7.2 Pit 6

- 7.2.1** The second pit undertaken was located on the raised area of the churchyard, east of the north-south steps leading up to the space. The pit was located immediately west of Compass Archaeology Evaluation Trench 4 (2016), the backfill of which was observed in the east section. The pit was an irregular rectangle in plan, a result of the crazy paving, measuring 1.03m in length x 0.64m in width x 0.54-0.70m in depth (fig.6).



Figure 6: Pit 6, showing backfill below MOT Type 1 and existing paving. Facing E, scale 0.5m.

- 7.2.2** The stratigraphy in the pit comprised 70mm of stone paving slabs and loose bedding sandy mortar [32] above 170mm of MOT Type 1 (33), taken to be the backfill of the Compass Archaeology Evaluation Trench, overlying 300 – 460mm of dark brown soil (34), similar in composition to that observed in Pit 5.

7.2.3 The water pipe was observed in the south side of the trench, running in an east-west direction, adjacent to the churchyard wall, recorded at a depth of 0.6m (13.717mOD).

7.2.4 No finds or features of archaeological interest were observed in this pit.

7.3 Pit 8

7.3.1 The final pit was located on the north side of the churchyard wall, within the east-west perimeter path, 0.47m west of the metal entrance gate. This trench was almost square in plan, with the southern edge abutting the wall, measuring 1.0m x 0.9m x 0.5m in depth (13.090mOD) (fig.7).



Figure 7: Pit 8, showing backfill surrounding ceramic pipe and associated metal drain. Facing S, scale 1m.

7.3.2 The stratigraphy in the final trench consisted of a looser, lighter brown soil (35), containing frequent angular stones and small fragments of CBM below the existing paving slabs [30].

7.3.3 A ceramic pipe ran through the southern side of the trench in an east-west direction, with an associated metal drain and connection to the north. No cut for this feature was visible.

7.3.4 The surveyed water pipe was not detected in this pit, and there were no finds or features of archaeological interest recorded.

8 DISCUSSION

- 8.1 The watching brief presented very few features of archaeological interest, with the stratigraphy being confined to a homogenous backfill. The dark colour noted in Pits 5 and 6 may suggest it is residual burial soils from the former burial ground, however, the limited depth of excavation may also indicate it is post-medieval / modern made ground associated with the observed services.
- 8.2 With the exception of some possible brickwork in Pit 5 no features of archaeological interest were observed and no dateable finds were recovered. No human remains, articulated or disarticulated, were observed during the watching brief.

9 CONCLUSION

- 9.1 The watching brief adds little to the existing understanding of the site, mostly due to the limited depths of excavation reached on this occasion, with no new features or stratigraphy being observed from that recorded during previous investigations.
- 9.2 The works were undertaken as part of a larger enhancement works to the public space, so it is anticipated that the research questions set out in the preceding WSI (Compass Archaeology 2017) will be able to be more fully answered during the subsequent stages of archaeological monitoring.

10 SOURCES

10.1 Digital Sources

Greater London Historic Environment Record. glher@HistoricEngland.org.uk

Henry A Harben. 1918. 'Mary (St.) at Hill - Mary (St.) de Cricheche, Chapel.' *A Dictionary of London*. [Online] Available at: <<http://www.british-history.ac.uk/no-series/dictionary-of-london/mary-at-hill-mary-de-cricheche-chapel>> [accessed 7 December 2015]

Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management. 2015. 'Change to the granting of exhumation licences from 1 January 2015.' [Online] Available: <http://www.iccmuk.com/iccm/library/Changes%20to%20burial%20legislation%20-%20summary%20from%20MoJ.pdf> [Accessed: 12 December 2016]

London Archaeological Archive & Resource Centre (LAARC) database. <http://archive.museumoflondon.org.uk/laarc/caralogue/>

London Archaeologist Round-up 2008. 2 *Lovat Lane EC3* [Online] Available: <<http://archive.museumoflondon.org.uk/laarc>> [Accessed 7 December 2015]

St Mary-at-Hill. *St Mary-at-Hill Church for Billingsgate*. [Online] Available: <<http://www.stmary-at-hill.org/history.php>> [Accessed 7 December 2015]

10.2 Bibliography

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- Rees, P.W and Everett, P. 2013. *Eastcheap Conservation Area Character Summary and Management Strategy Supplementary Planning Document*. City of London
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- Smith Nicholls, F. 2015. *Written Scheme of investigation for an Archaeological Evaluation at St Mary-at-Hill, Lovat Lane City of London EC3R 8EE* (Unpublished document, Compass Archaeology)
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APPENDIX I: LIST OF CONTEXTS

Number	Pit	Description
[30]	5, 8	Paving slabs / bedding for perimeter path
(31)	5	Dark brown soil backfill
[32]	6	Crazy paving / bedding on raised area
(33)	6	MOT Type 1
(34)	6	Dark brown soil backfill
(35)	8	Lighter brown backfill

APPENDIX II: OASIS RECORDING FORM

OASIS ID: [compassa1-282661](#)

Project details

Project name	St Mary-At-Hill April 2017
Short description of the project	Archaeological watching brief conducted on three trial pits located within the churchyard, on the 3rd April 2017. The trial pits measured between 0.6 and 1.0m square, and hand dug to a maximum depth of 0.5m to expose an existing water pipe. The stratigraphy across all three pits comprised post-medieval backfill/made ground below the existing paved path. No natural geology was encountered, nor any finds or features of archaeological interest. The watching brief was conducted as part of the ongoing enhancement works under the site code MHL16.
Project dates	Start: 03-04-2017 End: 03-04-2017
Previous/future work	Yes / Yes
Any associated project reference codes	MHL - Sitecode
Any associated project reference codes	16/00751/FULL - Planning Application No.
Type of project	Recording project
Site status	Conservation Area
Site status	Local Authority Designated Archaeological Area
Current Land use	Other 4 - Churchyard
Current Land use	Other 14 - Recreational usage
Monument type	NONE None
Significant Finds	NONE None
Investigation type	"Watching Brief"
Prompt	Planning condition

Project location

Country	England
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Site location	GREATER LONDON CITY OF LONDON CITY OF LONDON St Mary-At-Hill
Postcode	EC3R 8EE
Study area	3 Square metres
Site coordinates	TQ 533075 180775 50.941155188544 0.18237430505 50 56 28 N 000 10 56 E Point
Site coordinates	TQ 533089 180779 50.941158409989 0.182394387356 50 56 28 N 000 10 56 E Point

Project creators

Name of Organisation	Compass Archaeology
Project brief originator	City of London Department of the Built Environment
Project design originator	Compass Archaeology
Project director/manager	Compass Archaeology
Project supervisor	Heidi Archer
Type of sponsor/funding body	City of London Corporation

Project archives

Physical Archive Exists?	No
Digital Archive recipient	Museum of London Archaeological Archive
Digital Contents	"none"
Digital Media available	"Images raster / digital photography","Text"
Paper Archive recipient	Museum of London Archaeological Archive
Paper Contents	"none"

Paper Media available "Context sheet", "Plan", "Unpublished Text"

Project bibliography 1

Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	St Mary-At-Hill, Lovat Lane, City of London EC3R 8EE: An Archaeological Watching Brief.
Author(s)/Editor(s)	Archer, H.
Date	2017
Issuer or publisher	Compass Archaeology
Place of issue or publication	250 York Road, London, SW11 3SJ
Description	Short report summarising the results of a small watching brief conducted in St Mary-At-Hill churchyard as part of the ongoing archaeological monitoring of a programme of enhancement works to the public space. The report consists of the background to the work, including a summary of the historical and archaeological background, OS plan of the groundworks and methodological statement. Results comprise a stratigraphic summary of each pit supplemented by photographs, with concluding remarks.