

**Archaeological Watching Brief Report
The House of Detention
Clerkenwell Close, London
London Borough of Islington
EC1R 0AS**

NGR: TQ 31490 82302

Planning Ref: P2013/0123/FUL

**ASE Project No: 8538
Site Code: SSL15**

**ASE Report No: 2016349
OASIS id: archaeol6-261834**

By Steve White

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Abstract

Archaeology South-East was commissioned CgMs Consulting to undertake an archaeological watching brief at The House of Detention in the London Borough of Islington between April and August of 2016.

The excavation of a basement reduction of 3.50m to a depth of 16.10m AOD and an external garden reduction of 1.00m to 18.60m AOD were monitored. Only 19th/early 20th century made ground deposits were observed, no natural deposits were encountered, nor were any archaeological features or deposits of any interest.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Site Background

1.1.1 Archaeology South-East (ASE) was commissioned by CgMs Consulting to undertake an archaeological watching brief at The House of Detention, Clerkenwell Close, London, EC1R 0AS, Borough of Islington (NGR: TQ 31490 82302; Figure 1).

1.1.2 The site is bounded by Sans Walk to the south, Clerkenwell Close to the west, an open parking lot to the east and buildings to the north. The site included two Grade II listed building, including part of the former House of Detention.

1.2 Geology and Topography

1.2.1 The solid geology of the site is London Clay overlain by superficial deposits of Hackney Gravel. The natural topography in the area rises up from Clerkenwell Green to the south with ground level at the site at 19.60m AOD.

1.3 Planning Background

1.3.1 Planning consent (Planning Ref: P2013/0123/FUL) was granted for the construction of a two storey extension with a single storey gallery connection at ground floor and new basement, as well as underpinning of the existing listed building. Permission was granted subject to the following condition:

3: "No development shall take place on site unless and until the applicant has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological mitigation in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) which has been submitted by the applicant and approved by the Local Planning Authority. No development shall take place other than in accordance with the Written Scheme of Investigation approved. No development shall take place on site unless and until a detailed design and method statement for the foundations and all ground works has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The foundations and ground works shall be carried out strictly in accordance with the details so approved and maintained as such thereafter. Any hidden historic features which are revealed during the course of works shall be retained in situ, work suspended in the relevant area of the building and the Council notified immediately. Provision shall be made for the retention and/or proper recording, as required.

REASON: Heritage assets of archaeological interest may survive on the site. The planning authority wishes to secure the provision of archaeological investigation and the subsequent recording of the remains prior to development, in accordance with the NPPF, policy 7.8 of the London Plan 2011, policies D43;D44;D45;D46 and D47 of the Islington Unitary Development Plan 2002 and policy CS9B of the Islington Core Strategy 2011."

1.3.2 Accordingly, a WSI (ASE 2015) was compiled and approved prior to the watching brief.

1.4 Aims and Objectives

1.4.1 The general aims of the watching brief are:

- To define, insofar as possible, the date, character, form and function of any archaeological features observed on site
- To establish the presence or absence of archaeological remains within the footprint of the proposed development and to preserve by record any such remains
- To determine the survival, extent and minimum depth below modern ground level of any such remains
- To determine the nature and significance of any archaeological deposits

1.4.2 The site specific research questions included:

- Was there any evidence relating to the nearby medieval nunnery of St. Mary?
- Was there any evidence of survival of buildings related to the 17th century Bridewell prison?
- Was there any evidence of remains relating to the 19th century Mulberry Garden drill and exercise yards and barracks?

1.5 Scope of Report

1.5.1 This report details the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out between May and August 2016. This report has been prepared in accordance with the Written Scheme of Investigation (ibid).

2.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 Introduction

2.1.1 The following information is principally drawn from a Desk Based Assessment undertaken for a site at 15 Clerkenwell Close by CgMs (CgMs 2013).

2.2 Prehistoric

2.2.1 A pointed Palaeolithic handaxe was found at 22 Clerkenwell Green to the south of the site and a Palaeolithic stag's horn hoe has been identified at St Johns Square to the south-east.

2.2.2 No finds or features of Mesolithic; Neolithic or Bronze Age date have been identified within the area.

2.2.3 Clerkenwell Road to the south of the site follows the line of a possible Iron Age trackway later used as a Roman road. Archaeological work at the Engineers Carpark site on Clerkenwell Close revealed a sub-circular ditch containing Iron Age pottery. Iron Age pottery was also identified at Sans Walk immediately to the south of the site.

2.3 Roman

2.3.1 Theobalds Road/Clerkenwell Road follows the line of a possible Roman road from Silchester to Colchester. Typical archaeological features associated with Roman roads can include evidence for activity, occupation and settlement, including ditches and representing land/agricultural divisions, together with quarry pits, burials and stray finds. However, the sole find of Roman date within the area comprises a sherd of stamped Samian ware from Farringdon Road, c.200m to the west of the site.

2.4 Anglo-Saxon

2.4.1 No finds or features of Anglo-Saxon date have been identified within the area.

2.5 Medieval

2.5.1 The priory of St Mary, a Nunnery of Augustinian Canonesses, was founded on 14 acres of land adjacent to the Clerks Well in 1154. The site lies within the established precinct of the nunnery, immediately to the north of the nunnery buildings, probably within fields, however there is the possibility that the site overlies associated buildings.

2.5.2 Extensive archaeological work within the area has revealed traces of the nunnery buildings. Work at 21 Bowling Green Lane c.200m to the west of the site revealed an agricultural or horticultural soil horizon which has been attributed to the nunnery gardens. Masonry remains have also been identified at 35 Clerkenwell Close, c.50m to the south of the site, while excavations at 42-46 Clerkenwell Close to the south-west revealed remains of the kitchen range. The site of the nun's mill has been identified at Ray Street to the west of the site.

2.5.3 Late medieval pits cut into earlier medieval soil horizons were identified at 37A Clerkenwell Green, south of the site, and quarry pits likely to predate the 12th century were found at 9-10 Jerusalem Passage, south-east of the site. Masonry observed in the basement at 6 Clerkenwell Close to the south of the site has been dated to the medieval period.

2.6 Post-medieval & Modern

2.6.1 After the Dissolution, the nunnery became private mansions with gardens. Buildings survived the Dissolution; documentary evidence attests to the survival of part of the nunnery, called the Nun's Hall, into the 19th century, at 36-41 Clerkenwell Close c.40m to the south of the site.

2.6.2 The Agas Map (1570) shows the area largely unchanged from the medieval period with the site within, or just to the north of, the Nunnery complex.

2.6.3 The site itself was part of a nunnery field purchased after the Dissolution by Sir Thomas Seckford, Master of the Court of Requests. By the early 1600s the site had come into the ownership of the Bedingfield family, and by 1615 the Bedingfield property was acquired by the Middlesex Justices of the Peace for a new county prison.

2.6.4 By the end of 1615 a 'house of correction' had been erected on one of the former Bedingfield garden plots. This 'New Prison', or Clerkenwell Bridewell, took the overspill from the City prisons. It was an L-shaped block, partially enclosing a yard. A passage leading to it from Clerkenwell Green became known as New Prison Walk (now St James's Walk), and the path leading north (now the upper end of Clerkenwell Close) Bridewell Walk.

2.6.5 In 1663–4 a 'great building' of quadrangular form was erected on the north side of the Bridewell, immediately to the north of the site, as a workhouse for a union or 'corporation' of Middlesex parishes. Its governors had wanted £18,000 to build and furnish this 'Corporation Workhouse' for 600 able-bodied and 100 aged and blind paupers, but the plan seems to have been reduced in the undertaking. As it was, more than half the inmates died in the plague of 1665, and, unable to generate sufficient income, the workhouse was defunct by 1675.

2.6.6 In 1679 the Bridewell burnt down, and soon after the prison was moved into part of the disused workhouse.

2.6.7 The prison and workhouse buildings remained until the early 1800s, by which time the dilapidated, makeshift Bridewell had been superseded by a new Middlesex House of Correction at Coldbath Fields, and the workhouse had closed. Some of the buildings were then taken down and, war with France intensifying, both sites were appropriated by the volunteers as an adjunct to the Mulberry Garden, with drill and exercise yards and a barracks.

- 2.6.8 Ogilby and Morgan's map (1676) shows the site as occupied by Bridewell Prison buildings and yard, with Mulberry Garden to the north and east. Rocque's Map of 1745 shows the site occupied by prison structures fronting New Prison Walk, again with gardens to the north and east.
- 2.6.9 Horwood's Survey of 1799-1819 shows the site occupied by buildings. New Prison Walk has been renamed Shorts Buildings. No change is shown on the 1813 Map of Clerkenwell.
- 2.6.10 By January 1816, with war over, the county had decided to rebuild the New Prison on a much larger scale by extending it over the Mulberry Garden, Bridewell and workhouse sites, as well as those of adjacent houses in Bridewell Walk, Short's Buildings and St James's Walk. A plan had been drawn up by William Wickings, the county surveyor, which incorporated existing fabric at the south end. The building contract was won by Robert Streather of Cambridge Heath Road, Bethnal Green, at a price of £18,799; this included a new boundary wall, large parts of which survive today, particularly on the south and west. Work was completed in 1818.
- 2.6.11 By the 1840s the New Prison had become overcrowded and outmoded. In some places there were 30 or 40 prisoners to a room, lines on the floor demarcating the areas for particular classes of inmate. A new short-stay prison, the Middlesex House of Detention, was designed for the site by William Moseley, the county surveyor, and erected in 1846–7.
- 2.6.12 The new buildings were strongly influenced by the recently completed Pentonville Prison, designed on the 'separate' system. The long wings of single cells, galleries, and the lofty octagonal central hall at the intersection of the male wings all followed the Pentonville pattern, though here in a 'rougher, less expensive' style of architecture. As at Pentonville, each cell had its own WC and basin, but only one small window, high in the end wall. A ventilation and heating system was designed by Moseley in collaboration with Messrs Haden of Trowbridge, who had been responsible for that at Pentonville. Fresh air was heated in the basement, circulated to the cells, then taken off in flues and expelled through a funnel above the central hall.
- 2.6.13 Moseley's plan was basically cruciform, with the three northern wings given over to male prisoners. At the foot of the wider south arm of the cross, which housed offices, staff rooms, the chapel and other parts common to both sexes, stood a transverse wing for female prisoners. Most of the reception cells, as well as the examining rooms, baths and fumigating rooms through which all new prisoners passed before being distributed to the main wings, were situated in the basement. (Some of these apartments survived the demolition of the prison and were incorporated in the basement of the Hugh Myddelton School). Between the wings were exercise yards, where the prisoners walked in circles, and against the south wall, near the gates, were an entrance lodge and residences for the governor and matron. A new boundary wall was built on the east side, but elsewhere Streather's wall of 1816–18 was retained.

- 2.6.14 Intended largely for those awaiting trial for petty crime, the House of Detention was not as fearsome as the long-term correctional prisons. Communication between prisoners was forbidden, but they were allowed to wear their own clothes, and food could be brought in by friends and relatives, as could work materials for those who wished to carry on their outside occupations.
- 2.6.15 The female wing was extended with more cells at the western end in 1853–4, designed by the new county surveyor Frederick Pownall. In 1865–7 Pownall also added an extra storey of cells to each of the three male wings, and at the same time built a house for the chief warder at the south-west corner of the boundary wall. Apart from the wall, this three-storey stuccoed house is the only part of the prison to survive above ground today.
- 2.6.16 In December 1867 Fenian agitators used a barrel of gunpowder to blow up some 60ft or more of the north perimeter wall in a failed attempt to free two compatriots. Six civilians were killed and some fifty injured, and most of the houses opposite in Corporation Lane (now Row) were damaged beyond repair.
- 2.6.17 The prison, closed in 1886, was replaced by the Hugh Myddelton School. Part of the lowest floor of the former Middlesex House of Detention survives below the playground and main buildings of the former Hugh Myddelton School, and were altered during the Second World War for use as an air-raid shelter. The largest accessible part of the prison is the former female corridor, which runs from the south-west to the north-east, with broad 'transepts' off its middle stages. There are cells off either side of the passage, and elsewhere, and the passage is interrupted but not blocked by later, transverse walls acting as screens. The female corridor was the southernmost range of the prison; to the north of it was a central hall, roughly underneath the hall of the present college building, with male corridors running off to the west, north and east, and a shorter administrative corridor to the south.
- 2.6.18 The site itself contains the Grade II Listed (List number 1195751) former chief warder's house of the Middlesex House of Detention, subsequently becoming a school keeper's house. Built into the wall at the south-west corner of the former prison yard of the 1845 William Moseley designed prison. The house is brick covered with stucco, three storeys high with two-window range to the north. The west bay projects considerably. The building has a segmental-arched entrance with panelled doorcase and fanlight, a stucco storey band between ground and first floors and stucco sill bands to the first and second floors. The rear of the building, to Sans Walk and Clerkenwell Close, is a blank elevation of brick stepped slightly in at plinth level and between ground and first floors (Listed building description).
- 2.6.19 The 1896 1st Revision OS Map reveals Shorts Buildings has been renamed Sans Walk, and the existing building is extant with the Hugh Myddelton School to the north-east. No change is shown in the Third Edition Ordnance Survey (1921) to the present day.
- 2.6.20 The World War Two bomb damage map (1946) shows that the building on the site did not suffer any blast damage.

3.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY

3.1 Fieldwork Methodology

3.1.1 The archaeological monitoring consisted of ground reduction works to varying depths within the basement and within the garden to the north. The work was undertaken throughout 2016.

3.1.2 All recording was undertaken in line with the WSI (ASE2105).

3.2 Fieldwork Constraints

3.2.1 The main constraint to the fieldwork was access to the basement during the basement reduction process.

3.3 The Site Archive

3.3.1 ASE informed the London Archaeological Archive and Research Centre (LAARC) before the commencement of fieldwork that a site archive would be generated. The site archive is currently held at the offices of ASE and will be deposited at the LAARC in due course. The contents of the archive are tabulated below (Table 1).

Context sheets	2
Section sheets	0
Digital photos	20
Watching brief forms	10

Table 1: Quantification of site paper archive

4.0 RESULTS

4.1 Ground reduction works monitored April-August 2016

- 4.1.1 Site visits occurred between April and August of 2016 to monitor the works undertaken in the basement and garden area.
- 4.1.2 The garden area, to the north of the main building, was the first area of site to be completed. This was reduced to a depth of 1.00m below ground level, to a depth of 18.60m AOD. The ground reduction in this area did not extend down to natural deposits, and was observed to be through a single homogenous made ground deposit. [1].
- 4.1.3 The main body of work undertaken was ground reduction inside the existing basement of the house. The object of the reduction exercise was to drop the basement depth from its current level to 3.50m below ground level (16.10m AOD) at certain structural points, with the rest of the basement reduced to 2.00m below ground level (17.60m AOD). This reduction was observed on multiple visits between the April and August of 2016, and these visits revealed a single homogenous late post-medieval/early modern made ground deposit [2], probably contemporaneous with the construction of the currently standing building. Broken yellow stock brick was observed in the made ground, providing a relatively robust date of 19th/early 20th century for this deposit.
- 4.1.4 Made ground deposits [1] and [2] are believed to be the same deposit, indicating that a large scale levelling exercise was undertaken during the 19th/early 20th century; prior to the construction of the currently standing building.

Context	Type	Interpretation	Max. Length m	Max. Width m	Deposit Thickness m
01	Layer	Made ground	Garden	Garden	1.00
02	Layer	Made ground	Basement	Basement	2.50

Table 2: List of recorded contexts

5.0 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

5.1 Stratigraphic Sequence and survival

- 5.1.1 No structural remains were observed and no archaeological features, deposits or finds of interest were observed.
- 5.1.2 The observed deposits were all of made ground indicating that large scale levelling was undertaken prior to the construction of the currently standing building.

5.2 Conclusions and considerations of research aims

- 5.2.1 To define, insofar as possible, the date, character, form and function of any archaeological features observed on site.

Nineteenth/early twentieth century made ground deposits were observed beneath the current standing building and in the garden area.

- 5.2.2 To establish the presence or absence of archaeological remains within the footprint of the proposed development and to preserve by record any such remains.

No archaeological remains of any interest were observed within the monitored areas.

- 5.2.3 To determine the survival, extent and minimum depth below modern ground level of any such remains.

No archaeological remains of any interest were observed within the monitored areas.

- 5.2.4 To determine the nature and significance of any archaeological deposits.

Nineteenth/early twentieth century made ground was the only recorded deposit observed. This material existed from ground level to a depth of at least 3.50m below present ground level (16.10m AOD). The made ground is not archaeologically significant.

- 5.2.5 Was there any evidence relating to the nearby medieval nunnery of St. Mary?

None was observed.

- 5.2.6 Was there any evidence of survival of buildings related to the 17th century Bridewell prison?

No.

- 5.2.7 Was there any evidence of remains relating to the 19th century Mulberry Garden drill and exercise yards and barracks?

No.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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HER Summary

Site Code	SSL15					
Identification Name and Address	The House of Detention, Clerkenwell Close					
County, District &/or Borough	London Borough of Islington					
OS Grid Refs.	TQ 31490 82302					
Geology	Kempton Park Gravels & Underlying London Clay					
Arch. South-East Project Number	8538					
Type of Fieldwork			Watching Brief			
Type of Site			Deep Urban			
Dates of Fieldwork			4/2016-8/2016			
Sponsor/Client	CgMs Consulting					
Project Manager	Andy Leonard					
Project Supervisor	Steve White					
Period Summary						
				Modern		
Summary	<p><i>Archaeology South-East was commissioned CgMs Consulting to undertake an archaeological watching brief at The House of Detention in the London Borough of Islington between April and August of 2016. The excavation of a basement reduction of 3.50m to a depth of 16.10m AOD and an external garden reduction of 1.00m to 18.60m AOD were monitored. Only 19th/early 20th century made ground deposits were observed, no natural deposits were encountered, nor were any archaeological features or deposits of any interest.</i></p>					

OASIS Form**OASIS ID: archaeol6-261834****Project details**

Project name The House of Detention, Clerkenwell Close

Short description of the project Archaeology South-East was commissioned CgMs Consulting to undertake an archaeological watching brief at The House of Detention in the London Borough of Islington between April and August of 2016. The excavation of a basement reduction of 3.50m to a depth of 16.10m AOD and an external garden reduction of 1.00m to 18.60m AOD were monitored. Only 19th/early 20th century made ground deposits were observed, no natural deposits were encountered, nor were any archaeological features or deposits of any interest.

Project dates Start: 28-04-2016 End: 04-08-2016

Previous/future work Not known / Not known

Any associated project reference codes SSL15 - Sitecode

Type of project Field evaluation

Site status None

Current Land use Residential 1 - General Residential

Monument type NONE None

Significant Finds NONE None

Methods & techniques "Sample Trenches","Visual Inspection"

Development type Urban residential (e.g. flats, houses, etc.)

Prompt Planning condition

Position in the planning process After full determination (eg. As a condition)

Project location

Country	England
Site location	GREATER LONDON ISLINGTON ISLINGTON The House of Detention, Clerkenwell Close
Postcode	EC1R 0AS
Study area	130 Square metres
Site coordinates	TQ 31490 82302 51.523809251426 -0.104430515281 51 31 25 N 000 06 15 W Point

Project creators

Name of Organisation	Archaeology South-East
Project brief originator	CgMs Consulting
Project design originator	CgMs Consulting
Project director/manager	Andy Leonard
Project supervisor	Steve White
Type of sponsor/funding body	Client
Name of sponsor/funding body	CgMs consulting

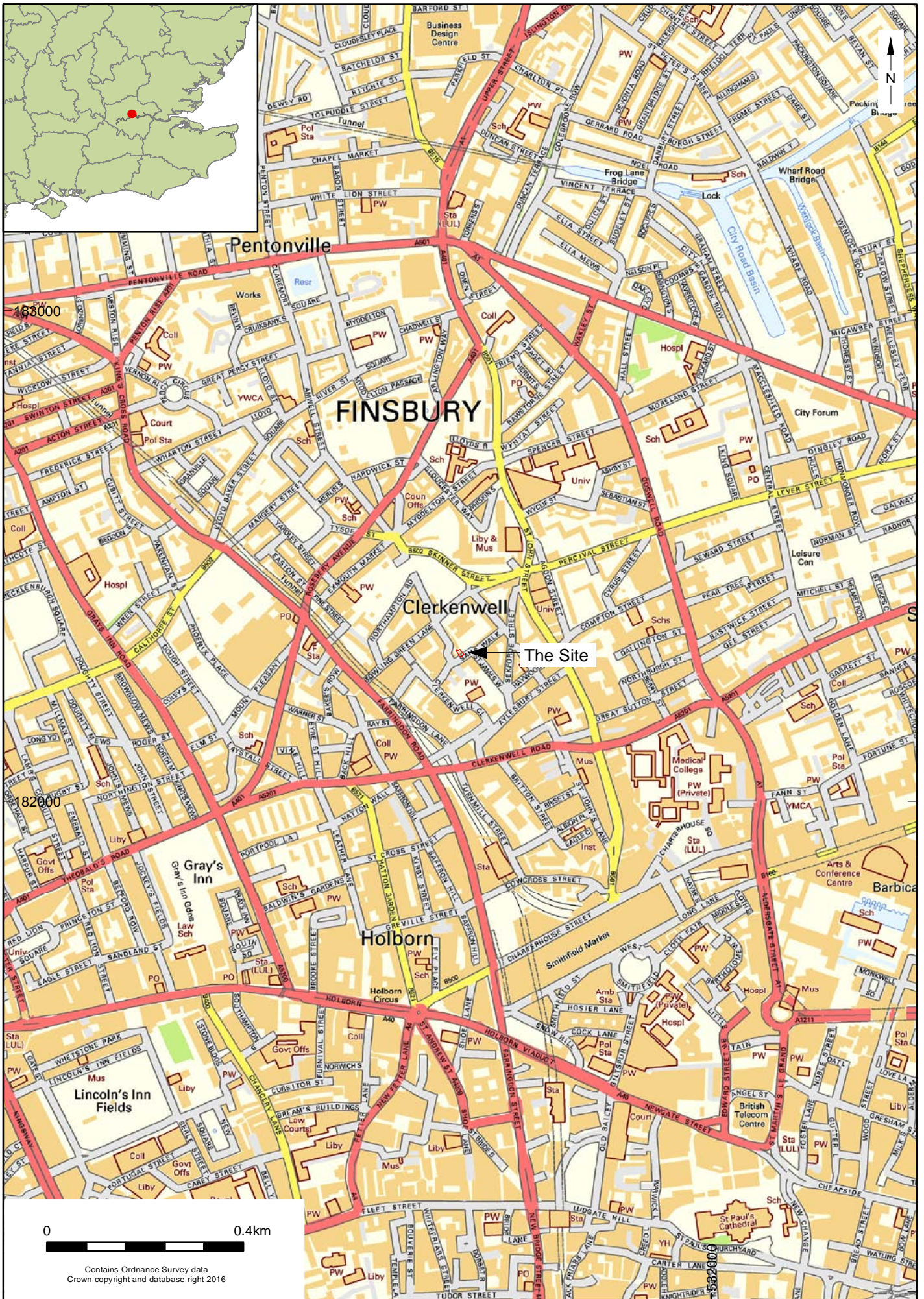
Project archives

Physical Archive Exists?	No
Physical Archive recipient	LAARC
Physical Archive ID	SSL15
Digital Archive recipient	LAARC
Digital Archive ID	SSL15

Digital Contents	"Stratigraphic","Survey"
Digital Media available	"Images raster / digital photography","Text"
Paper Archive recipient	LAARC
Paper Archive ID	SSL15
Paper Contents	"Stratigraphic","Survey"
Paper Media available	"Context sheet","Diary","Notebook - Excavation',' Research',' General Notes","Report"

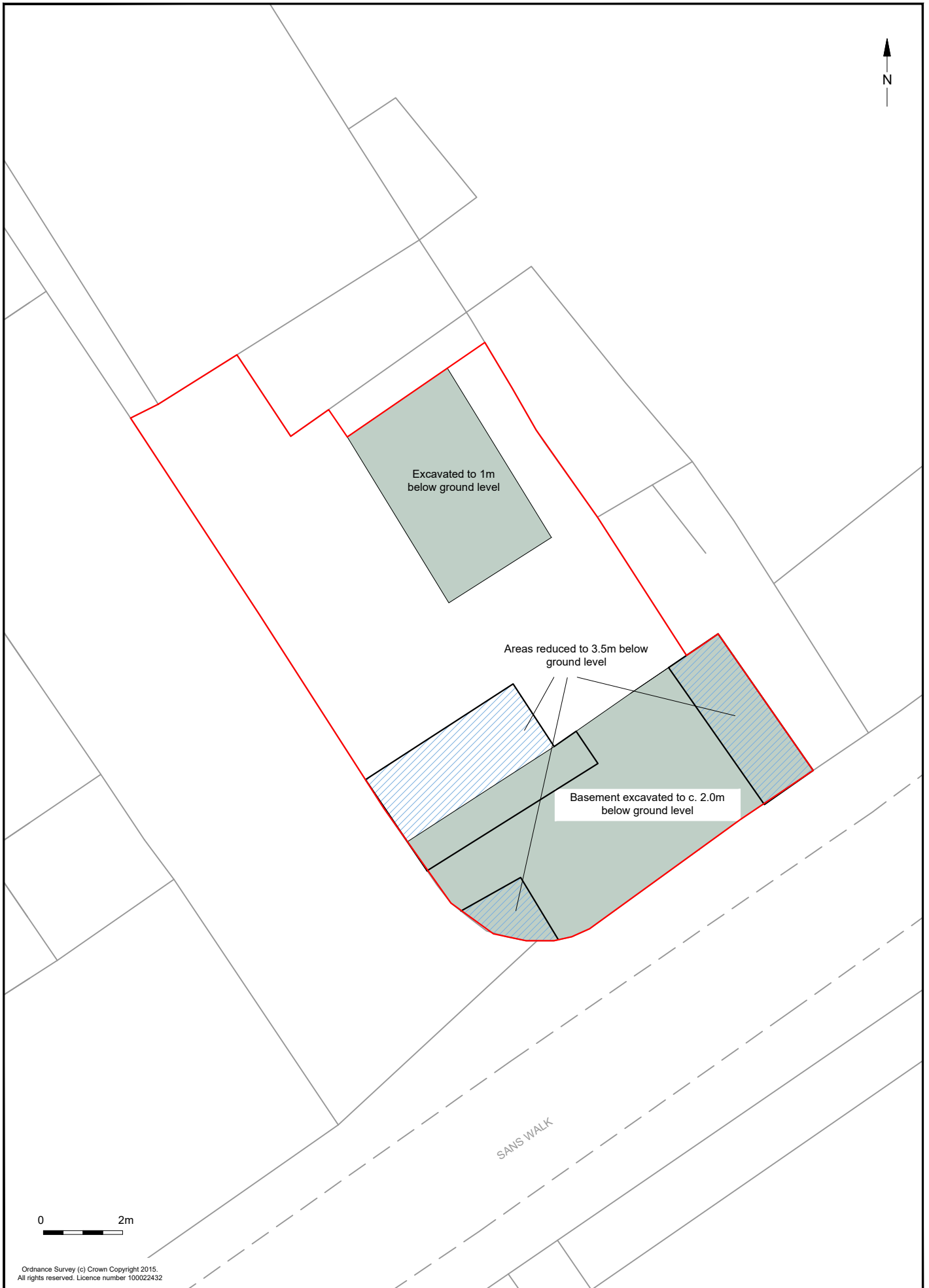
Project bibliography**1**

Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	An Archaeological Watching Brief at The House of Detention, Clerkenwell Close, London, EC1R 0AS, London Borough of Islington
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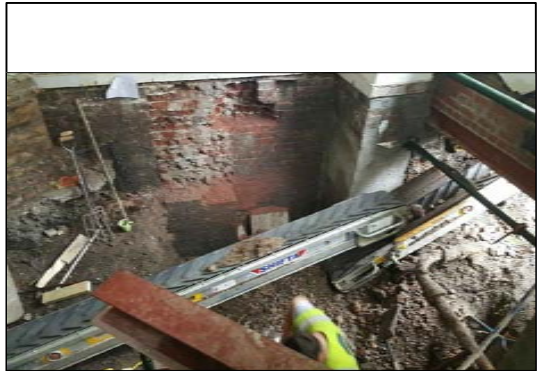
© Archaeology South-East		The House of Detention, Clerkenwell Close, London		Fig. 1
Project Ref: 8538	August 2016	Site location		
Report Ref: 2016332	Drawn by: AR			



© Archaeology South-East		House of Detention, Islington	Fig. 2
Project Ref: 8538	August 2016	Plan of monitored areas	
Report Ref: 2016332	Drawn by: AR		



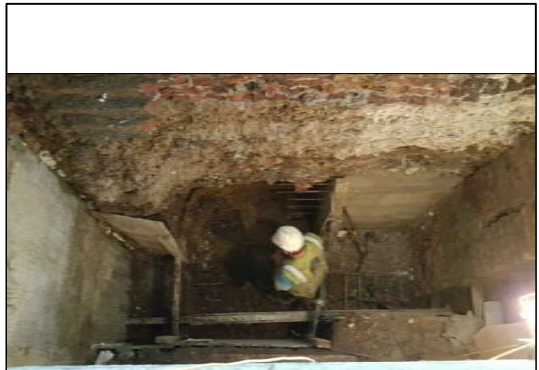
View east into the basement



View west into the basement



View east into the basement



View east into the basement



Made ground deposits



View north into the garden



View south into the basement

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