



SAINT BARTHOLOMEW'S GARDENS
Buckhurst Street
London
E1

London Borough of Tower Hamlets

An archaeological impact assessment

November 2005



MUSEUM OF LONDON

Archaeology Service

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Site Code: BGZ 05
National Grid Reference: 534957 182196

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Summary (non-technical)

This report has been commissioned by the London Borough of Tower Hamlets, in order to record and assess the archaeological impact of redevelopment within St. Bartholomew's Gardens, Buckhurst Street, London E1. The purpose of the assessment, which included both historical research and fieldwork, was to establish if the proposed development would have any impact on the burial ground attached to St. Bartholomew's Church (now Steeple Court).

This report presents the results of both the historical research and the fieldwork.

Work in advance of the building of a new community centre was monitored between 06-10-2005 and 07-10-2005.

Archaeological deposits were recorded in section in 3 trial pits. Natural ground was not observed and the highest survival of archaeological deposits occurred at c. 11.70m OD.

No human remains were disturbed during the watching brief and the recorded deposits are believed to be from the demolition of St. Bartholomew's School and the subsequent backfilling of its cellars.

Together, the results of the historical research and watching brief indicate that the present development will have no impact on the burial ground of St. Bartholomew's Church. However, any future development to the north of the present site appears likely to have some impact.

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1 Introduction

1.1 Site background

The watching brief took place at St, Bartholomew's Gardens, Buckhurst Street, London E1, hereafter called 'the site'. The site is located on the eastern side of Buckhurst Gardens, a small recreation ground, bounded by Buckhurst Street to the east, Steeple Court (formerly St. Bartholomew's Church) to the north (see Fig 1). At present the site is occupied by two small single-story buildings, a children's day-care centre and a youth club, hereafter referred to as 'Building 1' and 'Building 2'. The present planning application proposes the demolition of the two buildings and replacement by a single multi-purpose community centre. The centre of the site is at OS National Grid Reference 534957 182196. Modern ground level immediately adjacent to the site is c.11.90mOD. The site code is BGZ 05.

1.2 Origin and scope of the report

This report was commissioned by the London Borough of Tower Hamlets and produced by the Museum of London Archaeology Service (MoLAS). The report has been prepared within the terms of the relevant Standard specified by the Institute of Field Archaeologists (IFA, 2001).

MoLAS was commissioned to undertake documentary research into the background of St, Bartholomew's Church and to determine, if possible, the original extent of the associated burial ground.

The purpose of the watching brief was to determine whether the proposed development of the site would have any impact on the burial ground attached to St. Bartholomew's Church and to record the nature and extent of any archaeological remains present.

This report presents the results of both the documentary research and the watching brief.

All research is undertaken within the priorities established in the Museum of London's *A research framework for London Archaeology*, 2002.

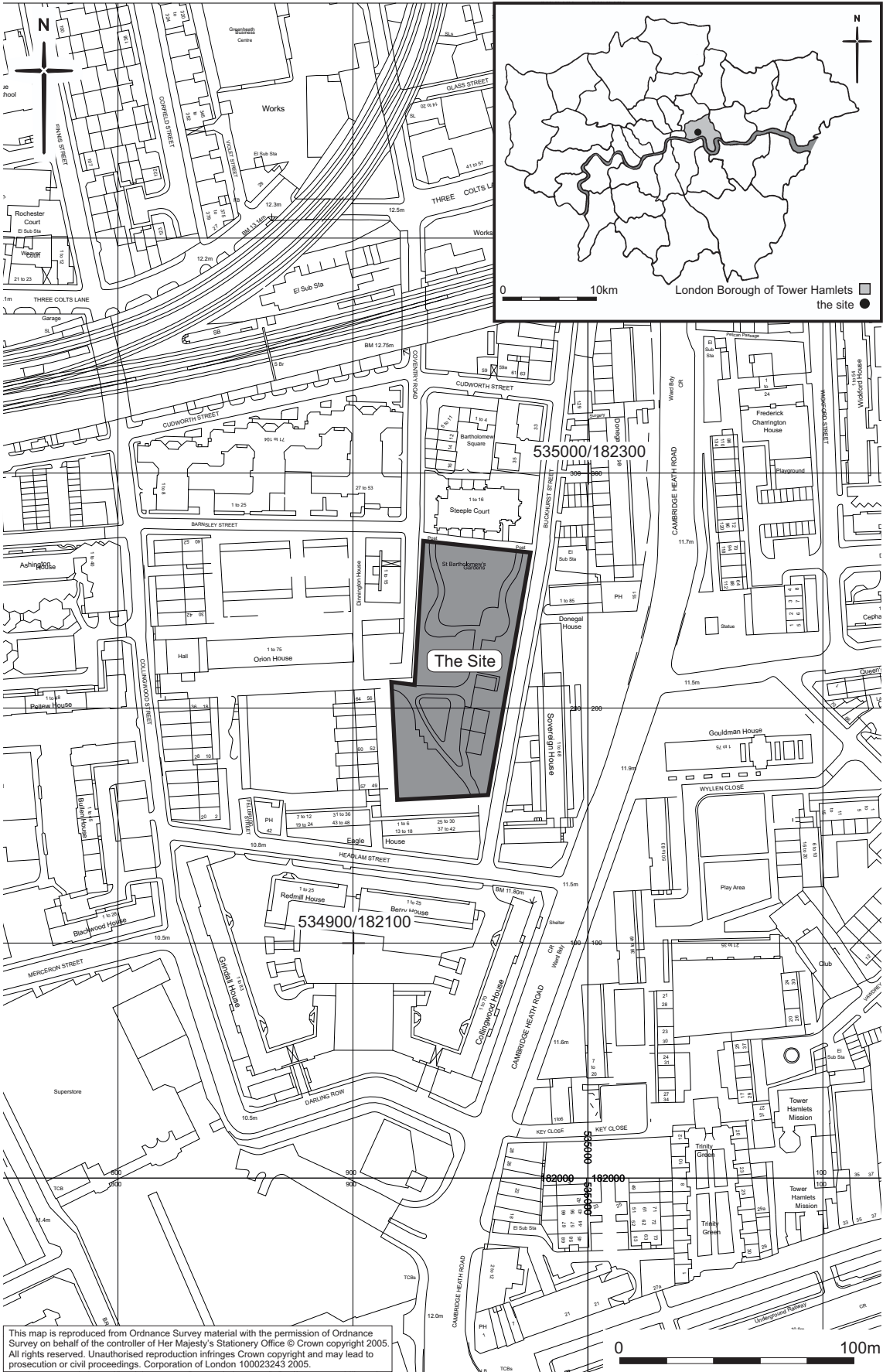


Fig 1 Site location

2 Topographical and historical background

2.1 Topography

London occupies part of the Thames Basin, a broad syncline of chalk filled in the centre with Tertiary sands and clays. In the most of London, this Tertiary series of bedrock consists of London Clay. Above the bedrock lie the Pleistocene (Quaternary) fluvial deposits of the River Thames arranged in flights or gravel terraces. These terraces represent the remains of former floodplains of the river, the highest being the oldest with each terrace becoming progressively younger down the valley side. The site lies on the Taplow Gravel terrace, which in places is overlain by brickearth.

The underlying natural deposit in this area is London Clay, sealed by sand and gravel. The Ordnance Survey Geological Maps suggest that the gravel is capped in places by brickearth.

2.2 Prehistoric to Medieval

Previous archaeological work in the vicinity, coupled with historic and cartographic evidence, indicates that the site appears to lie in open ground until the Post-medieval period.

2.3 Post-medieval

The Roque map of 1746 shows some development along Dog Row (now Cambridge Heath Road) but the site of this investigation is shown as open field or pasture.

The Stratford- Le- Bow of 1799 map shows that there had still been no development of the site (*fig 2*).

By 1827, and the publication of Greenwood's map, there is an increase in development along Dog Row but the area of the site is still open ground, named as 'Dodd's Place'

The site was acquired by the church in 1841 and consecrated in 1844. Some alteration to the church occurred in 1887. The church was bomb damaged in 1941 and reopened in 1955. Presentation was suspended in 1971 and the parish united with St. John and St. Simon Zelotes. In 1983 the church was closed and appropriated to residential use under the Church Commission Scheme. Conversion to flats, Steeple Court, occurred in 1996.

The church of St. Bartholomew's is mentioned in Holmes's The London Burial Grounds

114. *St. Bartholomew's Churchyard*, near Cambridge Heath Road.-
Nearly an acre. This was laid out by the Metropolitan Public Garden
Association in 1855, and is maintained by the London County Council.
It is immensely appreciated (*The London Burial Grounds, Mrs Basil
Holmes, 1896*).

The earliest map showing development of the site is The Stanford map of 1862. This shows St. Bartholomew's church, with a small burial ground to the south and a school, Saint Bartholomew's, occupying the site of the present investigation (*fig 3.*)

The Ordnance Survey map of 1872 shows that burial yard was already disused by this time.

The watching brief

2.4 Methodology

All archaeological excavation and recording during the watching brief was done in MoLAS Archaeological Site Manual (MoLAS, 1994).

The trial pits were excavated by hand by the contractors, and monitored by a member of staff from MoLAS.

The locations of the areas of excavation were recorded by MoLAS staff offsetting from adjacent standing walls. This information was then plotted onto the OS grid.

The heights of observations and/or archaeological remains were recorded relative to Ordnance Datum OS benchmark located at the junction of Cambridge Heath Road and Headlam Street.

Where relevant, sections were drawn at a scale of 1:10 or 1:20; numbered contexts were allocated where appropriate.

The site has produced: 1 trial pit location plan; 14 context records; 3 1:20 section drawings.

The site records can be found under the site code BGZ 05 in the MoL archive.

2.5 Results of the watching brief

In total 3 separate interventions (trial pits) were made for the purposes of establishing the depth of the footings for the present buildings. These have been numbered 1 to 3 consecutively. There follows a brief description of the archaeological deposits as recorded.

For all trench locations see fig 4.

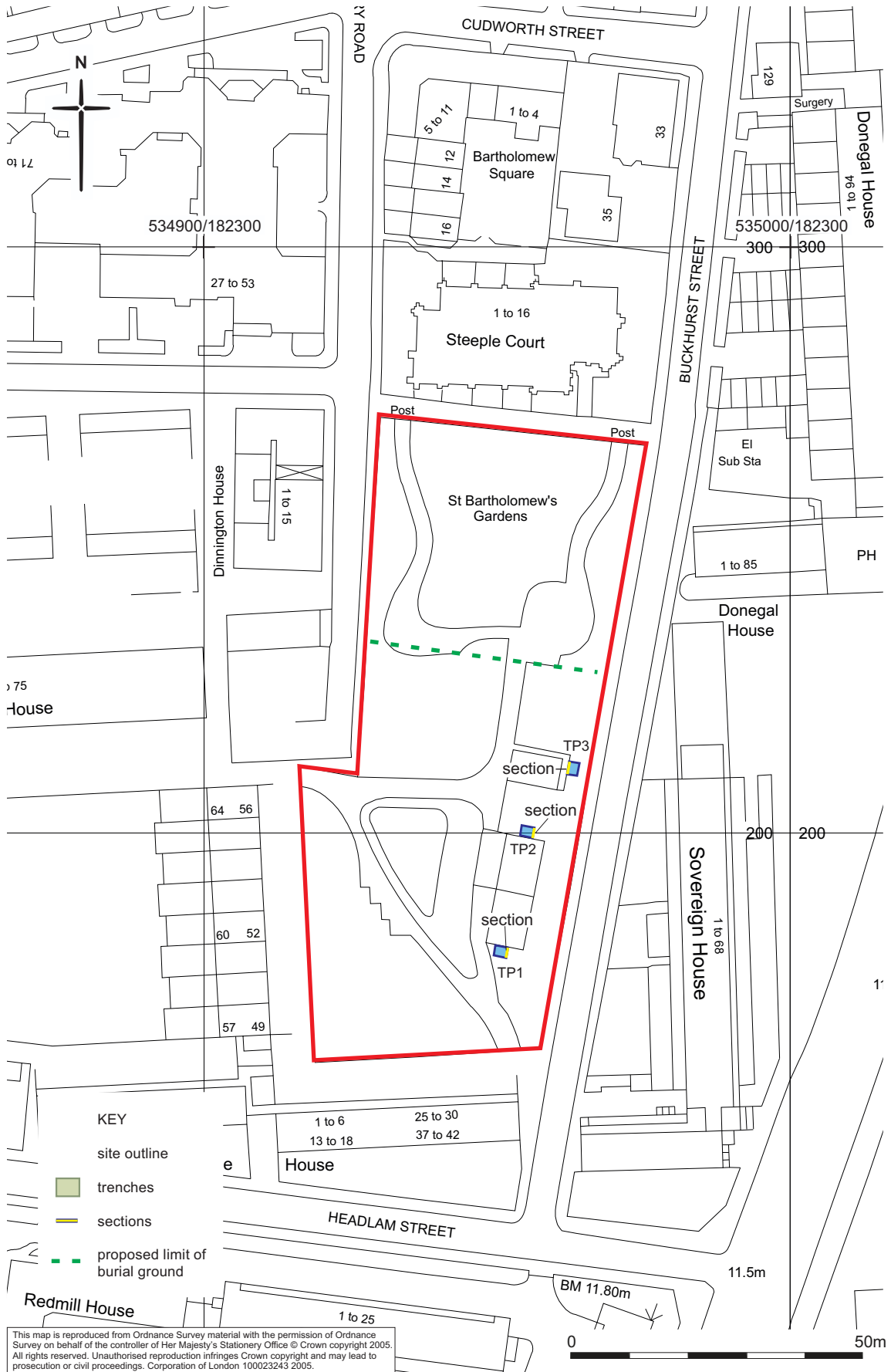


Fig 4 Trench Location

<i>Watching Brief Trial Pit 1</i>	
Location	South side of building 1
Dimensions	0.80m by 0.70m
Modern ground level/top of slab	c. 11.90m OD
Base of modern fill/slab	11.60m OD
Depth of archaeological deposits seen	0.80m
Level of base of deposits observed	c. 10.80m OD
Natural observed	N/A

Trial pit 1 was located within St. Bartholomew's Gardens, with the north limit defined by the south wall of Building 1. The earliest revealed deposit, at c. 10.90m OD, was a dark reddish-brown clay silt (4), with frequent inclusions of oyster shell. This was beneath a 0.46m thick layer of light greyish-brown ash (3), which contained inclusions of charcoal flecks and oyster shell. In turn this was sealed by 0.22m of mixed topsoil and orange-brown clay silt (2), containing brick fragments and charcoal flecks. The latest deposit was the modern topsoil (1).

<i>Watching Brief Trial Pit 2</i>	
Location	East side of building 2
Dimensions	1.00m by 1.00m
Modern ground level/top of slab	c. 11.90m OD
Base of modern fill/slab	c. 11.40m OD
Depth of archaeological deposits seen	1.20m
Level of base of deposits observed	c. 10.20m OD
Natural observed	N/A

Trial pit 2 was located against the east wall of Building 2, placing it within the bounds of the recreation ground. The earliest deposit revealed was a mottled grey and orange silty clay (9) at c. 10.20m OD. This was sealed by 0.50m of moderately compact dark reddish-brown clay silt containing brick fragments (8). The next deposit was a 0.15m thick layer of dark grey silty clay, with inclusions of brick and tile (7). This was overlain by 0.46m of soft light grey ash, which contained fragments of modern brick (6). The latest deposit was topsoil (5).

<i>Watching Brief Trial Pit 3</i>	
Location	North side of building 1
Dimensions	1.00m by 1.10m
Modern ground level/top of slab	c. 11.90m OD
Base of modern fill/slab	c. 11.70m OD
Depth of archaeological deposits seen	1.20m
Level of base of deposits observed	c. 10.50m OD
Natural observed	N/A

Trial pit 3 was located in a small car park between Buildings 1 and 2, with its southern limit formed by the north wall of Building 1. The earliest deposit recorded,

at c. 10.75m OD, was a dark reddish-brown clay silt, which contained oyster shells and charcoal flecks (14). This was then sealed by 0.24m of a paler but broadly similar deposit of clay silt (13). These deposits were overlain by 0.10m of very soft grey ash (12). Sealing the ash was 0.60m of greyish brown clay silt (11), truncated by modern services and containing frequent inclusions of building debris. The latest deposits were 0.20m of concrete and tarmac forming the carpark surface (10).

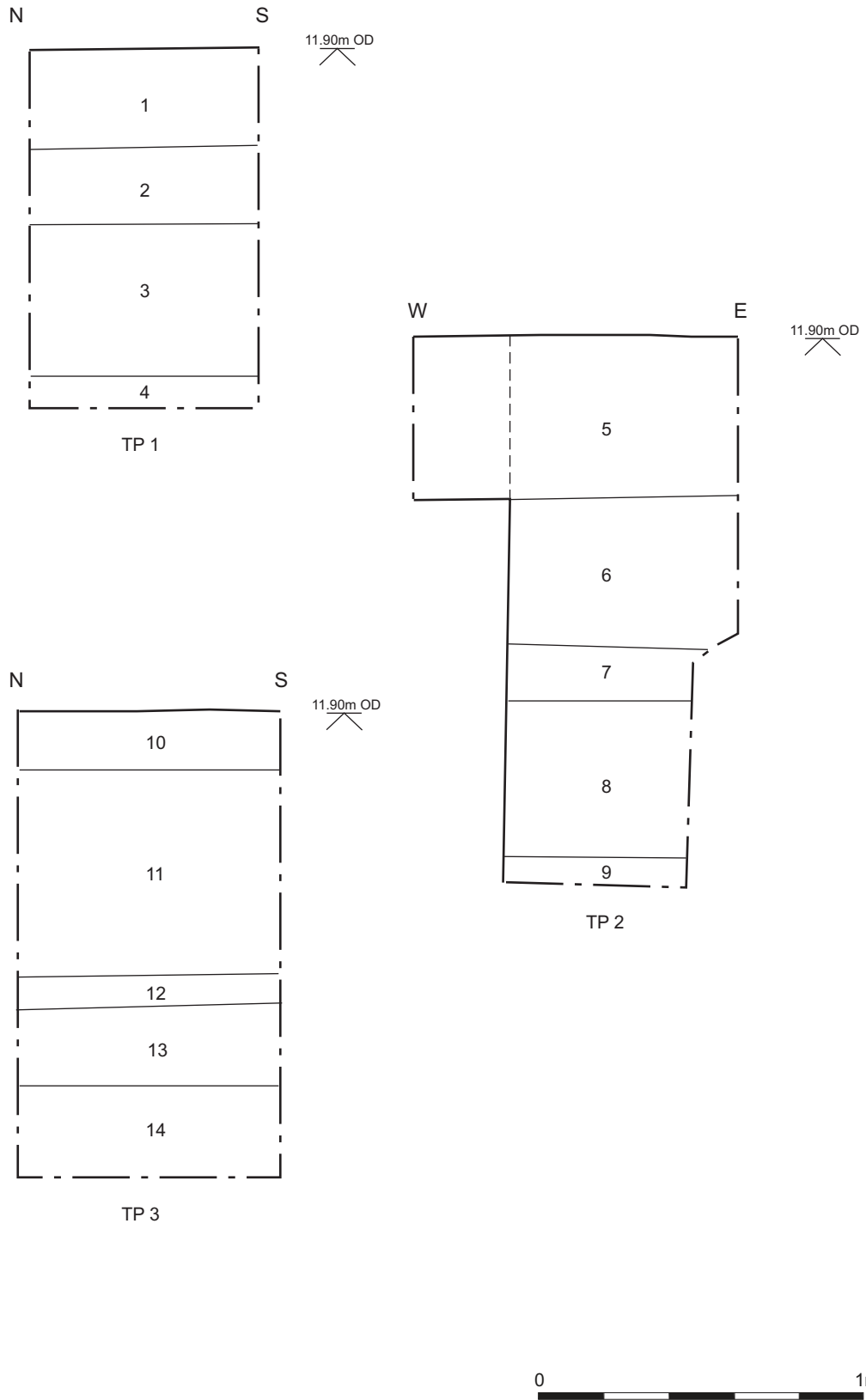


Fig 5 Sections

3 Potential of archaeology

3.1 Original research aims

- What was the extent of the burial ground attached to St. Bartholomew's Church?

The burial ground appears to covered little more than 1 acre (0.4047 hectares)

3.2 New research aims

The results of the archaeological investigation have not generated any new research aims.

3.3 Significance of the data

Whilst the archaeological remains are undoubtedly of local significance there is nothing to suggest that they are of regional or national importance.

4 Publication and archiving

Information on the results of the excavation will be made publicly available by means of a database in digital form, to permit inclusion of the site data in any future academic researches into the development of London.

The site archive containing original records and finds will be stored with the Museum of London within 12 months of the end of the excavation.

In view of the limited potential of the material (Sections 3) and the relatively limited significance of the data (Section 3.3) it is suggested that a short note on the results of the watching brief should appear in the annual round up of the *London Archaeologist*.

5 Conclusions

The results of the watching brief, together with the historic and cartographic evidence, suggests that the burial ground attached to St. Bartholomew's church was never particularly extensive, probably no larger than the 'Nearly an acre' (approximately 0.4047 hectares) recorded by Mrs Basil Holmes. The eleven years between the 1844 consecration of St. Bartholomew's and Holmes's 1855 reference does not appear to allow enough time for extensive use and subsequent contraction of the burial ground. As the 1872 OS map shows the grave yard was in use for less than three decades. Although the limits of the burial ground could not be accurately determined it does

appear that the area of investigation is situated approximately 15m beyond the southern boundary, on land formerly occupied by St. Bartholomew's School. The deposits recorded during the investigation are likely to date from the post-war demolition of the school and subsequent instatement as a recreation ground.

6 Acknowledgements

The author would like to thank Chris Yates of Borrás Construction Ltd. for his help and cooperation during the field work

7 Bibliography

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Institute of Field Archaeologists (IFA), supplement 2001, *By-Laws, Standards and Policy Statements of the Institute of Field Archaeologists: Standards and guidance – the collection, documentation conservation and research of archaeological materials*

Museum of London, 1994 *Archaeological Site Manual 3rd edition*

Museum of London, 2002 *A research framework for London archaeology 2002*

8 NMR OASIS archaeological report form

8.1 OASIS ID: molas1-11091

Project details

Project name	St. Bartholomew's Gardens, Buckhurst St, E1
Short description of the project	<p>An archaeological watching brief was undertaken at Saint Bartholomew's Gardens, Buckhurst Street, London E1. The purpose of the watching brief was to ascertain if the proposed redevelopment of 2 small buildings, presently occupying the site, would have any impact on the cemetery attached to St. Bartholomew's Church, which is located to the north of the site. The land was acquired by the Church in 1841 and consecration took place in 1844. The results of the watching brief, coupled with cartographic and historical research, indicates that the cemetery never grew beyond an acre (0.4047 hectares) in size, with the proposed development situated just beyond the southern boundary. Deposits recorded during the watching brief are likely to be associated with the post war demolition of a small school, also named St. Bartholomew's, which appears to have been contemporary with the church.</p>
Project dates	Start: 06-10-2005 End: 07-10-2005
Previous/future work	No / Not known
Any associated project reference codes	BGZ05 - Sitecode
Type of project	Recording project
Site status	None
Current Land use	Community Service 1 - Community Buildings
Monument type	NONE None
Significant Finds	OYSTER SHELL Post Medieval
Investigation type	"Watching Brief"
Prompt	Direction from Local Planning Authority - Direction 4

Project location

Country	England
Site location	GREATER LONDON TOWER HAMLETS BETHNAL GREEN Saint Bartholomew's Gardens, Buckhurst St, London E1
Postcode	E1
Study area	600.00 Square metres
Site coordinates	TQ 34900 82200 51 0 51 31 19 N 000 03 19 W Point

Project creators

Name of Organisation	MoLAS
Project brief originator	Local Authority Archaeologist and/or Planning Authority/advisory body
Project design originator	MoLAS
Project director/manager	David Lakin
Project supervisor	Mark Ingram
Type of sponsor/funding body	London Borough of Tower Hamlets

Project archives

Physical Archive Exists?	No
Digital Archive recipient	LAARC
Digital Archive ID	BGZ05
Digital Contents	"Stratigraphic","Survey"
Digital Media available	"Spreadsheets","Text"
Paper Archive recipient	LAARC

Paper Archive ID	BGZ05
Paper Contents	"Stratigraphic"
Paper Media available	"Context sheet","Microfilm","Miscellaneous Material","Plan","Report","Section"

Project bibliography 1

Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	Saint Bartholomews Gardens, Buckhurst Street,Bethnal Green, London E1; A report on the watching brief
Author(s)/Editor(s)	Ingram, M
Date	2005
Issuer or publisher	MoLAS
Place of issue or publication	London
Description	Unpublished watching brief report

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