

BASEMENT VAULTS AT NO 8 BALDERTON STREET London W1

City of Westminster

Standing building survey

June 2012



Basement vaults at No 8 Balderton Street London W1

City of Westminster

Standing Building Survey Report

Site code: BAL11

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SUMMARY

Museum of London Archaeology was commissioned by Chorus Group Ltd on behalf of Grosvenor West End Properties Ltd to investigate and record the basement of a standing building at No 8 Balderton Street, London W1. The investigation took place in March 2012.

The basement of the building consisted of brick-lined vaults in the north-east corner and along the northern edge of the site, comprising a half-vault aligned from north to south under the street pavement and, extending at right angles to its west, two barrel vaults parallel to each other. The more northerly of these barrel vaults ran for some 22m to the west, while only the east end of the southern vault survived. Most wall surfaces were rendered with cement, but the position, size and shape of the vaults suggest that the half-vault may originally have formed a narrow, open basement area in front of two of the first houses on the site, and subsequently been covered over. These houses, documented as Nos 13 and 14 George Street (later renamed Balderton Street), were built around 1730. No 14, to the south, is documented as occupied by the Grosvenor Brewery from at least 1795. The northern vault, on the site of No 13 to the north, may have been constructed soon after the house there was demolished to make way for a ground-level passage, running directly over the vault, which was created to give access to the church of St Mark, North Audley Street, to the north-west, constructed in 1825–28, and to a parochial school further to the north, opened in 1831. Two openings groined into the south wall of the northern vault suggest that this vault and the parallel southern vault were originally connected with each other and both belonged to the brewery, which later also occupied Nos 15 and 16 further to the south (where an archaeological evaluation has found evidence for similar vaulted cellars). The brewery continued in operation probably no later than c 1870. Although the buildings on the site were demolished to ground level in about 1907 it was not until 1925–26 that the next building was constructed, one of the first purpose-built public garages in London (architects, Wimperis and Simpson). The new building incorporated the northern vault, in which oil tanks are documented and a safe was built, but steps constructed down to it truncated the southern vault. The garage was statutorily listed (grade II) in 2009, and was being rebuilt as a hotel, retaining the street front and filling in the basement vaults.

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1 Introduction

1.1 Site location and background

Museum of London Archaeology (MOLA) carried out an archaeological survey of basement vaults in a standing building at No 8 Balderton Street, London W1, referred to in this document as the 'site' (Fig 1; Ordnance Survey national grid reference to the approximate centre of the site: 528300 180950). The site was bounded by Balderton Street (formerly George Street) on the east, Providence Court on the south, and adjacent buildings on the west and north. Constructed as a garage in 1925–26, which was closed in about 2009, this building is mentioned in passing in the relevant volume of *The Buildings of England* (Bradley & Pevsner 2003, 525), in two volumes of the *Survey of London* (1977; 1980) and in two studies by Donald Insall Associates Ltd (2009; 2011). MOLA previously carried out a desk-based assessment of the archaeological potential of the site (O'Gorman 2009) and an archaeological evaluation and watching brief (Braybrooke & English 2012). As far as is known, no attention has hitherto been paid to the basement vaults in the standing building. The Museum of London site code, by which all archaeological records of the site are indexed and archived, is BAL11.

1.2 Planning background

The standing building on the site was statutorily listed as a building of special architectural or historic interest in 2009 and is situated in Mayfair Conservation Area, designated in 1969 and extended in 1979 by the local planning authority, the City of Westminster (Westminster 2004). In January 2012 the City of Westminster gave planning consent for 'use as a hotel... [entailing] basement excavation, demolition and reconstruction behind retained facades...' (applications 11/06449/FULL and 11/06450/ADLBC), and this consent includes two conditions, among other conditions, that a record be made of the interior and exterior of the building before works begin (Condition 7), and a programme of archaeological work on the site be approved by the local planning authority and carried out (Condition 23); in addition, the applicants are reminded (Informative 4) that they must give English Heritage notice and access to record a listed building before its demolition. A historic building report (Insall 2009) considered the suitability of the building for statutory listing. Much of the historic information in this report is repeated in the other historic building report (Insall 2011), issued in connection with the planning application. A series of photographs has been taken to meet Condition 7 (Grosvenor 2011) and MOLA has carried out work to meet Condition 23.

The conditions cited and the work undertaken hitherto are in line with national and local planning policies with regard to the historic environment and the public understanding and appreciation of heritage assets such as listed buildings, expressed in the National Planning Policy Framework (DCMS 2012), existing English Heritage and government guidance on the application of relevant planning policies (EH 2011) and Westminster's Unitary Development Plan (2010, saved policies DES9 and DES10) and Core Strategy (2011, policy CS24).

1.3 Origin and scope of this report

The archaeological work of investigation and recording, and the production of this report, were commissioned from MOLA by Chorus Group Ltd, on behalf of Grosvenor West End Properties Ltd, and carried out in accordance with a written scheme of investigation (WSI)

prepared specifically for this survey (MOLA 2012), with the general purpose of satisfying the requirements of the planning conditions and policies cited above.

An archaeological assessment of the site (O’Gorman 2009) and a historic building report (Insall 2011) explain what is evidently significant about the site and building but, as mentioned, these did not allude to the basement vaults. English Heritage Greater London Archaeological Advisory Service advised that the heritage significance of the basement vaults was such that they should be investigated and recorded before being lost to view in the present redevelopment of the site. The applicable English Heritage specifications for such work, *Understanding historic buildings: a guide to good recording practice* (2006) gives guidance as to the scope and method of such investigation and recording. In the case of a building of established significance, such as the present listed building, where significant fabric may be lost or sealed up the archaeological aim should be to understand the fabric at risk within the context of the building as a whole and make a suitable record of what is to be lost (*ibid.*, 16, table 1). The response may vary, and in the present case the approach and the level of detail in the record would best correspond to ‘Level 2’ in these specifications. The archaeological survey reported here is therefore limited to the basement vaults of the listed building and considers the rest of the standing building only in that connection. The results of the archaeological evaluation and watching brief are also considered, but only where obviously relevant.

A short interim report was issued in May 2012 (Westman 2012). This included illustrations that are also reproduced as Figures 10, 11 and 16 in the present report, and described the vaults but did not suggest their age or purpose. The present document entirely supersedes this interim report.

1.4 Research aims and method of work

The overall aim of the programme of investigation and recording of the basement vaults, as set out in the WSI (MOLA 2012), was to identify, understand and record these vaults, for public benefit, and to elucidate their architectural, archaeological and historical interest. A Level 2 record is mainly a descriptive form of record, normally including archaeologists’ own dimensioned and annotated sketch drawings (plans, sections, elevations and details) in addition to any available measured survey, and to photographs of exteriors, interiors, setting and details. There would not necessarily be much documentary research accompanying a Level 2 record beyond ascertaining date, function and architect. In fact, as mentioned, much of the history of the present building is reported by Insall Associates (2011) and, for earlier buildings on the site, a map regression exercise is included in the earlier archaeological assessment (O’Gorman 2009).

The client provided PDF copies of plans of the existing building prepared for the redevelopment by Reardon Smith, architects, dated June 2011, and a plan and section by Plowman Craven Associates. Some of the original architect’s drawings, as well as historic photographs, are reproduced both in Insall’s study (2011) and notably also in a document produced by Heyne Tillett Steel, structural engineers (2009), obtained from the City of Westminster Planning Department’s website.

At the time of the survey the building was being partially demolished above ground, the external walls being retained, and access to the basement vaults was by the original stairs reached from the forecourt of the building. The physical fabric of the vaults was examined and recorded in the course of a single visit in March 2012, when the archaeologists were escorted by the client’s site staff and the client’s health and safety precautions were observed. The client provided task lighting, which was adequate to take digital photographs that could later be colour-corrected. A total of 48 shots were taken of 14 distinct views, and only one image of each view has been colour-corrected and retained. Some of the features detected inside the vaults, such as an iron trapdoor that led to the street, could not be seen externally because the relevant part of the pavement was hidden; the hoarded demolition and construction site extended across the street. Photographs (listed in Appendix 2) were taken to show the various parts of the vaults and features of

interest. Drawings (listed in Appendix 3) were made on site of the interior of the vaults in the form of dimensioned sketch plans and sections and dimensioned sketch drawings of details. Archaeological contexts were not distinguished in the fabric of the vaults, as not being necessary for reference, but otherwise recording was carried out in conformity with the Museum of London *Archaeological site manual* (1994).

A variety of historical information has been considered to a limited extent, sufficient to understand the vaults in their historical context. Information about successive buildings on the site comes largely from available secondary literature, based largely on documentary evidence, although this must be qualified and augmented as a result of examining the physical fabric of the building. The main sources of information, apart from Insall's study (2011), are the relevant volumes of the Survey of London (1977; 1980), various annual issues of Kelly's Post Office street directory, large-scale Ordnance Survey maps and minor on-line sources (cited in the text).

1.5 Organisation of this report and conventions used

The site is roughly square in plan, aligned to Balderton Street on its east (Fig 1). This street runs from slightly west of north to slightly east of south, but in this report is taken to run from north to south and directions are given accordingly, to simplify description and topographical references. Rooms and spaces in the building are identified by name as the 'northern vault, the 'southern vault' and the 'half-vaults'.

All dimensions are given in metres or millimetres, except possibly for certain brick and timber sizes, and heights are given where appropriate in metres above Ordnance datum (mean sea level), abbreviated 'mOD'.

Table 1: Abbreviations used in this report

BGS	British Geological Survey
DCLG	Department of Communities and Local Government
DCMS	Department of Culture, Media and Sport
EH	English Heritage
GLAAS	Greater London Archaeological Advisory Service
LCC	London County Council
MOLA	Museum of London Archaeology
OD	Ordnance Datum (mean sea level at Newlyn, Cornwall)
OS	Ordnance Survey
RSJ	rolled steel joist
WC	water closet

2 Topographical and historical background

2.1 Geology and topography

The uppermost natural geological deposits on the site consist of Lynch Hill gravels laid down in the flood plain of the River Thames roughly between 250,000 and 150,000 years ago (BGS 1993). At its nearest the Thames flows at present some 2km to the south-east of the site. Ground level on the site is at a height of about 24m OD, and the natural ground surface slopes gently from the north-west down to the south-east. The desk-based archaeological assessment (O’Gorman 2009) contains more information about the geology and the archaeological and historical background of the site.

2.2 Early history of the site

Oxford Street, running roughly from east to west at a distance of about 100m to the north of the site, is on the line of a Roman road connecting the Roman town of London, 3.5km to the east of the site, and places further to the west. In the medieval period the road, which would have been in constant use, was probably surrounded in the area of the site by meadows, woods and open fields, cultivated by villagers living in the area of Tyburn (modern Marble Arch), 500m to the west of the site, and along the line of Oxford Street. In the late 17th century an area of some 40ha of land immediately to the south of Oxford Street and east of the then royal hunting preserve of Hyde Park, including the present site, came into the hands of the Grosvenor family.

The Grosvenor estate was first laid out for building streets and houses in the 1720s, as the construction of fashionable London housing advanced westwards, although there may already have been inns and similar buildings on or near Oxford Street. Successive Building Acts laid down general rules for construction in London, such as the relation of the number of storeys and the height of houses to the width of their streets, the use of fire-resistant materials, party walls and so on, and a specific act of parliament had been obtained in 1711 to facilitate development of the Grosvenor estate. The usual procedure was for the landowner’s agent or surveyor to lay out streets and house plots, while building agreements were made between the landowner and the various builders or developers of particular plots. These latter, in return for paying an annual ground rent to the landowner, would be able to make whatever rent they could from the eventual occupiers of the buildings, but in doing so they carried all the risk attached to the construction and initial letting of the houses. The typical house in developments of this kind in London was a building in a terrace of similar houses, all fairly uniform in height, plan and width of street frontage, on several floors with a basement or half-basement, which included a basement-level area between the house front and the street. To attract affluent tenants such a development would include broad streets of relatively high-quality houses laid out generally to a grid pattern, with occasional squares where the possibility of houses was foregone in preference for some open space. In addition, side-streets and other streets were laid out that were narrower, with smaller houses intended for tradesmen, shopkeepers and services of various kinds, as well as mews and similar yards for stables and carriage-houses. In addition most of these estate developments in London between the late 17th and early 19th centuries usually included a church and a market (Summerson 2003). The initial building agreements and leases were for a certain term of years, lasting from 60 or 70 years up to, more typically, 99 years, which meant that the opportunity for rebuilding would usually come whenever the leases periodically fell in. The landowner did not prescribe what trades and businesses should be carried on in the service parts of the estate, but simply permitted them by attaching less restrictive conditions to the initial building agreement and to subsequent leases.

The relevant agreements for the buildings on the present site were concluded on 6 March 1725 between the landowner, Sir Richard Grosvenor, and 'Augustin Woollaston, esq.' (Survey of London 1977, appendix 1, plan A), one agreement (ibid., '51') covering the houses on the west side of George Street (the original name of Balderton Street) among many others and another agreement (ibid., '52') covering the land immediately to the west, which apparently included (among many other things) the ends of the gardens of the houses in the first agreement. These were followed in 1727 and 1728–29 respectively by the first building leases for the actual construction of houses by eight lessees, who included bricklayers, carpenters, a mason and a timber merchant. Annual rents varied at this stage between £3 and £12. The Survey of London states (1980, 111) that the plots in George Street were built on mainly in the 1730s, 'with small, rather mean houses. Their occupants were generally poor...'

The first reliable map of the area, Rocque's map of 1746 (Fig 2), shows in a rather schematic form and without much detail how up to that time streets had been laid out and houses built on and around the site. This central and northern part of the Grosvenor estate was laid out with streets running roughly from east to west, continuing streets that had already existed further to the east, and it included a large open space roughly in the centre of the estate, which naturally was given the name 'Grosvenor Square'. Unlike the finer residential areas beyond the three other sides of the square the area to the north of the square, between the fine houses fronting on to the north side of the square and Oxford Street, further to the north, was generally laid out with relatively narrow streets and adjacent yards, evidently in the expectation that these would be occupied by trades and services of various kinds (but see also 3.3, below). The street names, which Rocque records, suggest the character of this area: 'Mason's Yard' and 'Stable Yard' are obvious, while 'Swan Yard' and 'Hart Street' were probably named after inns.

The house plots around the site were not necessarily all built on immediately, as can be seen on Rocque's map, where a large area on the west side of George Street north of the present site still remained unbuilt on by 1746. In addition, back-lands in the centre of the rectangular areas bounded by the street grid were not necessarily fully occupied either. In the better quality parts of the estate back-land areas such as these, surrounded by finer houses, might have been gardens and mews attached to the houses. Rocque fails to show the character of these areas as clearly as Horwood does in his map of 1799 (Fig 3), published in several successive revisions around the end of the 18th and the beginning of the 19th century.

Many of the early occupants of service areas and plots on the estate were in construction, for obvious practical reasons, and they often stayed in business there because rebuilding and, especially, internal redecoration were continual concerns of the affluent residents of the finer houses on the estate. More 'noxious' trades, serving the needs of all the inhabitants, were permitted to occupy only the most marginal areas of the estate; they included butchers, farriers, candle and soap makers, and brewers and distillers, the activities of all of whom would produce noise, smells, waste or smoke (Survey of London 1977, 30). By the time of Horwood's map the remaining house plots along the west side of George Street had been built on, probably those from No 10 northwards. Horwood was concerned to show house numbers on his map, and those on the west side, running from north to south, go from No 1 to No 20 with a distinct kink in the building line, also shown on Rocque's map, between Nos 14 and 15. A survey of the householders on the estate in about 1790 identifies 33 householders in George Street, of whom 14 were in construction, half of them being carpenters (Survey of London 1977, 88). In addition a series of houses extended to the west, along the southern part of the site, fronting on to Providence Court. Horwood labels the interior of this grid square of house plots as a large 'timber yard' which, importantly for subsequent history, was entered only from North Audley Street, to its west, and not from George Street to its east. By contrast, to the south another area of land, which Horwood shows simply as empty, does seem to have been connected with a house in George Street, running without a break into what would otherwise have been the garden of No 16. At least part of the 'timber yard' was originally a large garden behind No 15 North Audley Street, which the Grosvenor estate took over in 1792 to make a new street. In the

event the intended street was not laid out and the plot of open ground was then used for pasturing cattle, beating carpets, parading local militiamen and for an upholsterer's workshops (Survey of London 1980, 105).

By the end of the 18th century George Street also contained 'warehouses, workshops and a small brewery' (Survey of London 1980, 111). A trade directory of 1841 (Kelly) indicates that the brewery was called the Grosvenor Brewery, situated at No 14 George Street and possibly in one or more adjacent buildings as well, under its proprietor, George Dickenson. He died in debt in 1848 and the next year the brewery was being advertised for sale by auction, to pay off his creditors (*London Gazette*, No 20943, 771; No 21049, 3836). The offering was described as a 'leasehold estate known as the Grosvenor Brewery and family residence, with the plant and utensils... and two other dwelling-houses, being Nos 14, 15 and 16 George-street, Grosvenor-square; also a Beer-house, called "The Good Intent", being No 5, the corner of Brown-street, with stabling attached thereto.' The latest documented date for the existence of the brewery determined so far is 1857, when the street directory gives 'Rood, John William & Co, brewers' as occupants of Nos 13–16 George Street (Kelly). The year before a witness in a criminal case described himself as a servant to 'Mr Rood, of Grosvenor brewery in George Street, Grosvenor square – they brew porter and ale – they do not keep a public house, nor retail beer or spirits... I attend on the brewer and get the wort ready' (Old Bailey Proceedings, 7 January 1856).

In the absence of more detailed evidence it is uncertain when exactly this brewery was established nor whether its establishment entailed much rebuilding. Redevelopment of individual buildings or groups of buildings on the estate is most likely to have occurred when leases fell in. From the fact that much of the street was redeveloped in the early 1870s (see below), it may be deduced that the original leases of the late 1720s were perhaps for a term of 70 years. Thus it may have been in the 1790s that an earlier phase of redevelopment occurred, which could have included a brewery, or its rebuilding. Although a brewery is not obviously shown on Horwood's map, which is of about this date, the connection between No 16 George Street and an open area to its west is suggestive. The Survey of London states of North Audley Street, to the west of the site, that 'in 1795 a timber yard, a brewery and Gillows' [furniture] workshops were in close proximity to the houses on the east side' (1980, 100), although the evidence for this date is not made more explicit. The firm of Gillows were celebrated furniture-makers, who invented the telescopic dining table and made the first English billiard tables, and they occupied Nos 11 and 12 North Audley Street between 1795 and 1814, and built workshops in its grounds, 'probably entered from... George Street, where a "Mr Gillow" was first [documented] in 1793' (ibid., 101). It seems likely that the extent to the west of these workshops, encroaching on what had hitherto been the garden at the back of Nos 11 and 12 North Audley Street, later formed the boundary between these houses and property to the east (ibid., 102). The brewery, contemporary with these workshops, was directly to their north at, putatively, Nos 14, 15 and 16 George Street, on much of the rest of the site. The fact that these house numbers were retained until at least 1849, when some of them they were referred to as 'dwellings', suggests that the original houses there may not have been rebuilt or altered very much.

2.3 Construction and uses of the vaults

The vaults in the north-east and north of the site comprised a half-vault aligned from north to south under the street pavement and, extending at right angles to its west, two barrel vaults parallel to each other.

The longer, northern barrel-vault on the site was situated directly under a passage at ground level between George Street and St Mark's church and would, presumably, have been constructed either when the passage was made or at some time thereafter. This passage was created when the church of St Mark was constructed to the north-west of the site, in part of what had previously been the timber yard on Horwood's map. This church, documented as having been designed in 1823–24 and built in 1825–28, was one of

London's new churches erected in accordance with the Church Building Act 1818 (Survey of London 1980, 105–6). The main entrance to the church was to be in North Audley Street, with an additional right of way provided to it through a passage from George Street. For the main entrance a house plot was taken over in North Audley Street and for the passage another house plot was taken in George Street (*ibid.*, 105), the latter apparently No 13 George Street. The location of this passage in relation to pre-existing buildings is shown most clearly in the first edition of the Ordnance Survey large-scale map, surveyed in 1870 (Fig 4). The north side of the passage is roughly in line with the front of the houses on the north side of Hart Street, to the east, and by this means the passage can be seen to have replaced all or most of the house plot that is No 13 on Horwood's map. The 1870 map shows only a single, relatively large house front to the south of the passage, between the passage and the pronounced kink in the building line on the west side of George Street, and this is similarly shown as only a single house, No 14, on Horwood's map. The two means of access to the church represented a social distinction. The parish vestry, in proposing the site, argued that on North Audley Street would be built 'a handsome Porch opening into a covered Passage communicating with the Chapel; ...there will also be a covered Passage communicating to the Chapel from George street, by which means the Entrance to the Pews, and to the free Seats can be kept distinct.' Thus the poor, coming from the east and sitting in the free seats, were to be kept separate from the richer inhabitants of the estate, whose own entrance on the west was expected by the vestry to be 'embellished' by 'the fashionable belles... at the conclusion of their devotions' (*ibid.*, 105). Construction began in 1825 and the church was consecrated in 1828, with 826 paying pews and 784 free seats.

After the passage was made a building could have existed at No 13 George Street only below ground or at 1st-floor level and above. It seems likely that the northern vault, together with a similar kind of vaulted cellar at No 14, with which it presumably was connected, were built for the Grosvenor Brewery. As trade directories noted (see above), the brewery was at Nos 14–16 in the 1840s, whereas it was at Nos 13–16 in the 1850s. It would have been difficult to build the northern vault while the house above still stood, and the implication is that the northern vault may have been built as a replacement for the house that had to be demolished there.

By contrast with the northern vault, the narrow half-vault to its east may already have existed as part of two of the first houses on the site. The half-vault could originally have formed two narrow, open basement areas in front of Nos 13 and 14. Its position in plan is roughly in line with the basement areas shown in front of No 14 and of houses to the north of No 13 on the 1870 map (Fig 4). The basement area in front of No 14 may have been kept open at first, after the church passage was made, only the half-vault at No 13 to its north being covered under the entrance to the passage. If this is correct there may originally have been coal cellars to the east of the half-vault, partly under the road, although the relatively low status of these houses means that such cellars did not necessarily exist.

Within a year of the new church being opened a charity school was proposed on a site immediately to its north, and in 1830–31 'a single-storey schoolroom for 150 children and a house for the schoolmistress were built' (*ibid.*, 108). Significantly, access to the school was by way of the passage from George Street rather than, for instance, from North Audley Street. The school was initially called after St George Hanover Square, 400m to the east, that being the parish church at the time, but was renamed St Mark's Schools in 1841. Four phases of additions and alterations to the school are documented from 1835 to 1859 (*ibid.*, 109), but none seems to have altered buildings to its east or the passage from George Street.

The probable date of some of the local leases falling in, around 1870, coincided with the succession of Hugh Lupus Grosvenor (Earl Grosvenor by courtesy), on his father's death in 1869, to his father's estate and the title of Marquess of Westminster. Reputedly the richest man in Britain, with a reputation as a philanthropist, a supporter of liberal causes and generally being a political ally of Gladstone, the Liberal prime minister, Grosvenor was made the first Duke of Westminster in 1874. His main interest in life was breeding and

racing thoroughbred horses. As a landlord he was 'autocratic, paternalistic and generally benevolent' (Thompson 2004). The replacement of the houses on the west side of George Street with better and more sanitary accommodation had been considered from 1868, and it was the Duke who engaged the Improved Industrial Dwellings Society to design and build a block of flats, such as were already building on the Grosvenor estate in Pimlico, 2.5km to the south-east of the site.

Nos 1–5 George Street were replaced in 1871–72 by Clarendon Buildings, with 38 flats, probably to a design by E R Robson, better known as the first architect to the London School Board (*ibid.*, 94–5). Further to the south Nos 6–9 George Street were demolished and replaced in 1872–73 by St Mark's Mansions, a parochial institute containing 'a soup kitchen, a church hall, premises for the parish working-men's club, a reading room and library, model lodgings for parish workers and the teaching staff of [the parochial school], and classrooms' (*ibid.*, 110). The Ordnance Survey map of 1894 (Fig 5) does not show this as clearly as that of 1914 (Fig 6), which labels the rear of the building as a 'Church Hall'. The 1894 map is, however, vital evidence for at least partial rebuilding of the buildings on the site, in order to widen the street on its west side; this must have been carried out between 1870 and 1894, the dates of the two successive map revisions. Perhaps the widening of the street coincided with the renaming of George Street as Balderton Street, documented in 1886, after a village on the Grosvenors' large rural estate in Cheshire. The widening of the street to the south implies that the front, at least, of the buildings at Nos 15–20, including some of those housing the brewery, would have been rebuilt then, if indeed the brewery was still operating.

The date when the Grosvenor Brewery stopped functioning is undetermined, but is very likely to have been around 1870, if not before. The Duke (then the Marquess) happened to be a teetotal supporter of the temperance movement and in negotiating new leases on his Mayfair estate he was concerned, by the non-continuance of existing lessees and by imposing restrictive covenants, to reduce the number of pubs there. He is said to have succeeded in reducing this number from 47 in 1869, when he succeeded his father, to 8 in 1899, when he died (Thompson 2004), and he would surely not have tolerated a brewery. By 1882 the street directory contains no mention of the brewery, although in fact no business of any kind is noted at Nos 14–17 (Kelly). The closure of the brewery probably facilitated the street widening.

The site of Nos 10–12 was taken up by a building that 'began its life as a parish gymnasium... partially erected in 1886–7' but there were not enough funds to complete it. The building in this incomplete state is apparently shown on the 1894 map (Fig 5), although this is difficult to reconcile with the clearer depiction of the church hall to the north on the 1914 map. The maps show that the passage to the church was enclosed by 1870, but do not make clear whether the building that oversailed the passage was connected with the buildings to its north or its south. Presumably this 1st-floor space was in fact connected with the brewery to its south, as was the basement vault below the passage (explaining why this space is in the present site). In 1900 the parish gymnasium was taken over and adapted for use by the Regent Street Polytechnic, which simultaneously took over part of St Mark's Mansions, and later in 1904, the buildings of the parochial school (*ibid.*, 109–110). The Regent Street Polytechnic (later the Polytechnic of Central London) continued to use this building until 1968; it was known as the Polytechnic Annexe, at No 16 Balderton Street (Survey of London 1980, 110–111). (The numbering of addresses in the street seems to have changed at the same time as the street was widened and renamed, but for addresses dating from an origin in George Street their original numbering is referred to here.)

The buildings to the south of the passage, on the present site, were demolished in about 1907 as part of a scheme to redevelop all the area to the south of St Mark's church. At one time this large site was intended to be a detached part of Selfridge's department store, which was in Oxford Street opposite the north end of Balderton Street. In the event this scheme was unrealised, the advice of the Grosvenor estate's trustees to demolish Nos 11 and 12 North Audley Street being overruled by the first and second dukes on at least two different occasions, to their financial loss, because of the architectural and historic interest

of these particular buildings (subsequently they were listed grade I) (*ibid.*, 102). The present site, including an additional area on the west extending as far as the garden of No 12 North Audley Street, remained empty for many years except for temporary wooden huts. The 1914 map shows the empty site (Fig 6) and the huts are shown in drawings of 1919 and 1920 (Heyne Tillett Steel 2009; not reproduced), where they appear to be carpenters' and blacksmith's workshops connected in some way with Selfridge's. The church passage seems to have remained in use and is shown on the 1914 map as if it were still enclosed, although what was on top of it, and whether that was occupied, is uncertain. Whether, and how, the vault under the passage was used in this period is equally uncertain.

Eventually, in 1925–26, the present building was constructed on the site to a design by E W Wimperis and W B Simpson, and is shown on the Ordnance Survey map of 1934 (Fig 7). This building was one of the first purpose-built garages in central London, where cars could be refuelled and repaired, hired or simply parked off the road. This would have been handy for middle-class out-of-town customers shopping in Oxford Street. For residents of Mayfair it may have substituted for some of the functions of livery stables, with carriages for hire, which had continued to operate until the end of the 19th century but in the first two decades of the 20th century, especially during the First World War, had been completely superseded by the use of motor vehicles. In any case, off-road parking would have been desirable for residents with cars, as parking in the road in London overnight was unusual in the 1920s and 30s.

Edmund Walter Wimperis (1865–1946) was the surveyor to the Grosvenor estate in London from 1910, a post previously occupied by his architectural mentor and cousin, John Thomas Wimperis. From 1911 he put in hand a ten-year programme of rebuilding on the estate, which was interrupted, firstly, by the outbreak of the First World War in 1914 and, secondly, by the Duke of Westminster's appointment in 1916 of Detmar Blow as his private architect and adviser (Survey of London 1977, 72–5). Although Wimperis's offer to resign in 1920 was not accepted his work as the estate surveyor became limited to part-time routine, and his private architectural practice was more profitable, usually in partnership with William Begg Simpson (1880–1959) and, from 1925, Leonard Rome Guthrie ([http:// www.scottisharchitects.org.uk/](http://www.scottisharchitects.org.uk/) accessed June 2012). In the 1920s this practice included the design of several buildings on the estate, of which the garage in Balderton Street was only a minor, and unusual, example. Wimperis finally resigned as surveyor in 1928.

The existing basement vaults were incorporated in the new garage (described in 3.1. and 3.3, below; front cover and Figs 8 and 9). The garage continued in operation until about 2009, when it was statutorily listed. The listing description makes no reference to the basement vaults or the church passage.

3 Description and interpretation of the basement vaults

The following description of the vaults should be read in conjunction with the plan and perspective drawings (Figs 10 and 11) and selected photographs (Figs 12–18). All the archaeological photographs and drawings are listed in Appendices 2 and 3.

3.1 Layout and structure of the vaults

Half-vault running from south to north

At basement level a half-vault ran from north to south along the east edge of the site, near the pavement or directly underneath it, for a distance of 6.60m (Fig 10). This half-vault was about 1.05m wide at the base and, springing from the side-wall on the east, 1.70m high at the crown of the vault on the west (FIG 14; sheets 2, 4, 6 and 7). Near its southern end the curve of the vault was interrupted by a vertical recess, leading to an iron trap-door set in an iron frame, presumably communicating with the street outside, although this could not be confirmed. The iron trap-door was at a slight slope and was itself perhaps below the level of the pavement outside. The floor was of cement and the walls were entirely rendered with cement, but slight irregularities indicated that the walls were of brick. The cement render meant that no changes in fabric or build could be detected.

Barrel-vaults running from east to west

The half-vault was connected in turn by fairly wide, well-squared openings with the east ends of two barrel vaults running from east to west, parallel to each other (Fig 11). The more northerly of these barrel-vaults ran along the north edge of the site, directly underneath an enclosed ground-level passage, for a distance of about 22m. This vault was uniformly 2.80m wide and 2.30m high (sheets 1, 2, 4 and 5). The crown of the vault sloped down slightly for a distance of some 2m towards the opening leading to the half-vault, and the alignment of the vault also changed slightly towards the south-east in this portion, as if the barrel-vault had been built to meet the opening to the half-vault (Fig 15). The floor of the northern vault was cemented, and partially raised by about 165mm along its north side for a distance of about 10m nearest its west end. The walls of the eastern half of the vault were rendered with cement, like those of the half-vault, and the render ended fairly abruptly midway, although to the west both render and the brick walls of the vault were heavily white-washed.

Where they could be seen most easily, the bricks in the northern vault measured some 4ins (100mm) in breadth, up to 3ins (76mm) in thickness and 8½ins (210mm) in length. The side-walls were some 14 or 15 courses high and the vault proper above them contained a total of 52 courses. The bricks in the side-walls were laid generally to English bond, while the wall at the west end of the vault, which seemed to be of the same build as the vault although only mortared and not bonded to it, was laid to Flemish bond. Two small, squared openings were built into the vault near its west end, in the southern half of the crown and above the south side-wall. These sloped up to the south, and had subsequently been blocked with brick (Fig 16).

The southern side-wall in the western half of the northern vault was set on brick footings forming a single course that projected into the space of the vault and progressively diverged from the line of the side-wall above it towards the east. Its east end was broken where a full-height opening had been constructed in the side of the vault. This could be interpreted as evidence for an earlier phase of the vault, possibly confined to the west, and if so would imply that at some time the vault had been largely rebuilt and possibly enlarged, probably with the full-height opening to the south, but this would have been difficult to ascertain without removing the paint and perhaps dismantling the brickwork.

The full-height opening, about 1.35m wide and groined into the barrel vault, was situated about 7.70m from the west end of the vault. It was matched by a similar opening, of the same width and similarly groined into the barrel vault, situated about 17.30m from the west end (Fig 17). Both openings had subsequently been blocked with brick walls forming a vertical face to the northern vault and partly block-bonded to the side-wall of the vault. A hole in the wall in the more westerly opening allowed another, similar wall to be detected about 370mm to the south of the vertical face around the hole in the first wall (sheet 1). The existence of this second wall suggested that there had originally been another space beyond it, the opening into which had been blocked flush in the same way and at the same time as in the northern vault. This space could have been another barrel vault, parallel to the northern vault.

From the southern part of the half-vault a second squared opening led to another barrel vault, running to the west. This southern vault was of the same width and height as the northern vault, but the brick walls of this vault could be seen under the cement render to have been broken very near their east end, and made good with vertical wall faces (Fig 18; sheets 6 and 7). The southern vault had thus been truncated and was blocked with a vertical wall at a distance of 1.2m from its east end.

A doorway was cut into the south wall of the northern vault at a distance of about 14.4m from the west end of the vault and 7.5m from the east end (Fig 17). This doorway was squared, about 0.9m wide, with the soffit of its concrete lintel at a height of 1.8m from the basement floor, and closed with a plain four-panelled timber door. This doorway led into the northern vault from the foot of a flight of granolithic steps constructed at a distance of 0.59m to the south of the vault. These steps led eastwards up to the ground floor of the garage.

Near the east end of the northern vault a brick buttress had been added to the north side-wall so as to create a solid vertical backing for a large steel safe, which was flanked by brick walls and thus firmly built into the vault (Fig 19; sheet 3).

3.2 Other related basement-level structures on the site

Two trenches were opened in roughly the north-western quarter of the site for an archaeological evaluation in October 2011, supplemented by three smaller trenches opened just inside the forecourt of the garage, on the eastern edge of the site, in a watching brief conducted during the demolition and construction contractor's operations in January 2012. The results of both interventions are fully described in a separate evaluation report (Braybrooke & English 2012), and here only the main points of most relevance to the basement vaults are mentioned.

The earliest feature may have been a narrow brick ramp sloping downwards to the west in the north-centre of the site, which seems to have preceded the first houses known to have been built on the site in the 1730s. Subsequently a substantial brick-lined and probably barrel-vaulted cellar was constructed to the north of the ramp, possibly associated with a stone-flagged floor at ground level. Lastly, a substantial wall, dated to the 19th century, was built running from north to south on the east edge of the site. This wall included the two rings of a brick barrel vault, which had extended from this wall westwards; possibly the north-south wall incorporated a pre-existing barrel vault, subsequently truncated.

3.3 Interpretation

The evidence of the basement vaults in the standing building is complemented by documentary sources of information, from which the topographical and historical context is drawn (2.2, above), and by the results of archaeological examination of remains below ground (3.2, above).

Evidence for a possible brewery before 1730

A brick ramp partially recorded in the western part of the site may have been built as a barrel drop down to a cellar, although this interpretation is very speculative. Its position, likely date and possible function suggest that some kind of commercial or simple industrial building may have existed on the site before the streets and houses of the Grosvenor estate were first laid out. Indeed, the existence of such a building may have dictated the position of George Street, or the street may have had a shorter precursor leading from Oxford Street. A small brewery could easily have been in operation on the site at the beginning of the 18th century, supplying inns and taverns in Oxford Street and also the crowds that gathered to watch the frequent public executions at Tyburn and the processions of the condemned along Oxford Street, in which drinking played a large part (Weinreb & Hibbert 2004).

Evidence for houses of 1730

The half-vaults along the eastern edge of the site coincide in position and plan with the front of the houses originally in the street. They may originally have formed narrow basement areas in front of the houses at Nos 13 and 14 George Street. That to the north, at No 13, would have been covered up later when the house at No 13 was replaced by a ground-level passage from east to west. The area at No 14 is shown as still open on the 1870 map, but subsequently seems to have been covered over, too.

Evidence for the Grosvenor Brewery, c 1795–c 1870

The Grosvenor Brewery is documented on the site from at least 1795 to about 1870, at first at Nos 14–16 George Street and later, at least, including No 13, to the north.

The two brick barrel vaults found in the evaluation to the south of the basement vaults were both similar in their width, 2.80m, and in general character to the northern vault. They were situated in line with the southern part of No 14 George Street and with No 15, respectively. There would have been room for the southern vault to have continued to the west, between the northern vault and the barrel vault found in the evaluation. It seems likely that these vaulted spaces at basement level were part of the brewery, either built for the brewery or later adapted and used by it. They would have been ideal for cooling the brewed beer and for storing it safely.

Implied date of the northern vault, c 1830

The northern basement vault, which survived intact, was probably built after a passage was made at ground level from George Street to St Mark's church and to the parish school, which were opened in 1828 and 1831 respectively. This vault, and any rooms at 1st-floor level over the passage as implied on maps of 1870 and later, were likely to have been connected with the brewery to their south. The northern vault originally had two full-height openings to its south which were groined into the vault; other, smaller means of access also led to the south. The vaults seem to have been used by the brewery only for storage, presumably to cool and keep beer. There was no sign of any more specific and different use, such as hearths and chimney flues suggesting use as a kitchen. There was no clear sign, either, of built-in stillage, the raised floor in the western half of the northern vault being insufficient for this (see also below).

Evidence for widening of the street, c 1886 (?)

The north–south wall found in the watching brief on the east edge of the site was on the line of, and formed part of, the new frontage established when the street was widened, and would therefore date from sometime between 1870 and 1894, possibly from 1886.

Survival of the northern vault, c 1907–2012

When the buildings on the site were demolished in 1907 and the site was cleared for subsequent construction the northern vault was not infilled or demolished, presumably

because the passage overhead was a public right of way between Balderton Street and St Mark's church. There is no evidence to suggest that any of the other vaults on the site survived in a usable state. The southern vault, for instance, may well have been largely filled in, as apparently were other vaults to its south and west.

Construction of garage incorporating basement vaults, 1925–26

Construction of the garage entailed reuse of the northern vault as a storage space and a place for a built-in safe. Existing openings to the south in this vault were blocked and a doorway inserted more conveniently at the foot of steps down to the basement from the ground floor of the garage, the position of which truncated the southern vault. The existence of a built-in safe may explain why this vault was provided with only one entrance.

Differential treatment of the wall surfaces indicated that the western half of the northern vault was partitioned off, probably because it was to contain oil storage tanks, according to the architect's plan (Fig 8). This plan shows a series of six tanks against the southern wall of the vault, and their presence there may explain why the floor of the vault around them was raised. Other than the raised floor, which on its own was unexplained, no sign of these tanks remained at the time of the survey. Only the walls of the eastern half and the half-vaults further to the east were rendered with cement, and in due course the partition wall and the tanks were removed.

The upper floors of the new garage also extended over the passage to St Mark's church (Fig 20).

4 Publication, archiving and copyright

4.1 Research aims and publication

It has proved possible to reconstruct, at least in outline, the history of the basement vaults under the latest building on the site, both from archaeological investigation of their fabric and from documentary sources. It was not necessary to investigate any of the building any further during demolition. The scholarly and professional requirement to publish the results of this investigation will be met by reporting the results in summary form in appropriate professional journals, including the annual excavation round-up in *London Archaeologist*. The summary, a copy of this report and other details will also be uploaded to OASIS (at <http://www.oasis.ac.uk/>...; see Appendix 1). Copies of this report will be offered to the client, the local planning authority, an appropriate local studies centre and English Heritage.

Within the limitations imposed by dealing with historical material and maps, the information in this document is, to the best knowledge of the author and MOLA, correct at the time of writing. Further archaeological investigation, or more information about the nature of the building, may require changes to all or parts of the document.

4.2 Archiving

The site records comprise a total of 9 sheets of drawings, as well as supplied plans and sections, 15 photographic images in digital colour format and notes on the documentary evidence. Another 15 images are added, taken for the assessment in 2009. No objects or samples were collected. The site records and a copy of this report will be deposited in due course in the London Archaeological Archive and Research Centre (LAARC), under the site code BAL11. The records and report of the archaeological evaluation and watching brief also share this site code and are archived similarly.

4.3 Copyright

Museum of London Archaeology retains copyright in the text and original illustrations of this document, and grants Chorus Group Ltd and their client and agents a licence to copy and make further use of the text and original artwork in connection with redevelopment of the present site, provided that their origin is credited. Copyright in other material rests with the existing copyright-holder. Modern Ordnance Survey plans are reproduced in this document under licence and remain Crown copyright.

5 Acknowledgements

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The investigation on site and the drawings and photographs were by Andrew Westman and Philip Henderson, and Andrew Westman carried out documentary research. Other photographs were taken for the assessment in 2011 by Laura O’Gorman. Tim Braybrooke provided information about the evaluation and watching brief, but the interpretation of their results in this report is entirely the present author’s responsibility. The cover and other illustrations were prepared by Juan José Fuldain.

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Appendix 1: Archaeological photographs

Images 1–15 were taken for the building survey in 2012 by Philip Henderson. Only one example of each shot is listed and has been archived, colour-corrected. Images 16–30 were taken for the assessment in 2009 by Laura O’Gorman.

Image number	Direction of view	Description
1 [3]	SW	N vault, W end: W groined opening in S wall, later blocked; raised floor
2 [7]	W	S vault, through opening from half-vault; vent holes to 1925 steps
3 [10]	NW	S vault, through opening from half-vault: N wall, broken
4 [11]	SW	S vault, through opening from half-vault: S & W walls
5 [14]	S	S vault: S wall, broken
6 [19]	N	Half-vault
7 [21]	S	Half-vault
8 [25]	NE	N Vault, E end, opening to half-vault
9 [27]	S	N vault, E end: built-in safe
10 [33]	SW	N vault, W half: E groined opening, later blocked; doorway inserted
11 [35]	W	As previous: whole width of vault
12 [39]	W	N vault: W end-wall
13 [40]	SW	N vault: W end-wall & openings to S
14 [43]	E	N vault from W end: W groined opening to S, inserted doorway
15 [46]	SW	N vault, W end: S wall, brickwork
16	SW	Exterior: entrances to garage and St Mark’s passage
17	SW	As previous: also part of forecourt to S
18	NW	Balderton Street, W side; Selfridges visible in Oxford Street to N
19	NE	As previous: E side
20	E	Brown Hart Gardens, N side
21	NE	Brown Hart Gardens: electricity substation
22	E	Brown Hart Gardens, S side
23	NW	Exterior: garage forecourt
24	W	Exterior: Providence Court, SE corner of garage
25	NE	Exterior: Providence Court, S wall of garage
26	NW	Exterior: Providence Court, S wall of garage
27	N	Exterior: Providence Court, detail of entrance in S wall of garage
28	W	Interior: vehicle ramp up to 1F in garage
29	W	Brown Hart Gardens, S side: garage in background
30	W	Brown Hart Gardens, N side: garage in background

Appendix 2: Archaeological drawings

Sheet No	Description
1	N vault, W end: annotated plan
2	N vault, E end, half-vault, S vault, steps from G to B: annotated plan
3	N vault, built-in safe: perspective sketch, elevation, section
4	Half-vault, N vault, E end, S vault: perspective see-through sketch, annotated
5	N vault, W end: sectional elevation; E end: sectional elevation
6	Half-vault, N end: sectional elevation; S end and S vault: sectional elevation E-W
7	S vault: sectional elevations S-N, W-E
8	N vault, W end: elevation detail of brick bond
9	Redrawing of sheet 7

OASIS ID: molas1-142716

Project details

Project name	8 Balderton Street, W1
Short description of the project	<p>A standing building survey was carried out at Nos 13 and 14 George Street (later renamed Balderton Street), were built around 1730. No 14, to the south, is documented as occupied by the Grosvenor Brewery from at least 1795. The northern vault, on the site of No 13 to the north, may have been constructed soon after the house there was demolished to make way for a ground-level passage, running directly over the vault. Two openings groined into the south wall of the northern vault suggest that this and the parallel southern vault were originally connected and both belonged to the brewery, which later also occupied Nos 15 and 16 further to the south (where an archaeological evaluation has found evidence for similar vaulted cellars). The brewery continued in operation probably no later than c 1870. Although the buildings on the site were demolished to ground level in about 1907 it was not until 1925-26 that the next building was constructed one of the first purpose-built public garages in London (architects, Wimperis and Simpson). The new building incorporated the northern vault, in which oil tanks are documented and a safe was built, but steps constructed down to it truncated the southern vault. Most wall surfaces were rendered with cement, but the position, size and shape of the vaults suggest that the half-vault may originally have formed a narrow, open basement area in front of two of the first houses on the site, and subsequently been covered over.</p>
Project dates	Start: 29-03-2012 End: 21-06-2012
Previous/future work	Not known / Yes
Any associated project reference codes	BAL11 - Sitecode
Type of project	Building Recording
Site status	Listed Building
Current Land use	Other 2 - In use as a building
Monument type	VAULT Post Medieval
Significant Finds	NONE None
Methods & techniques	"Annotated Sketch","Photographic Survey","Survey/Recording Of Fabric/Structure"
Prompt	Planning condition

Project location

Country	England
Site location	GREATER LONDON CITY OF WESTMINSTER CITY OF WESTMINSTER 8 Balderton Street
Postcode	W1
Study area	1140.00 Square metres
Site coordinates	TQ 28316 80951 51.512398407 -0.150653186901 51 30 44 N 000 09 02 W Point

Lat/Long Datum Unknown

Project creators

Name of Organisation MOLA

Project brief originator Local Authority Archaeologist and/or Planning Authority/advisory body

Project design originator MOLA

Project director/manager Craig Halsey

Project supervisor Andrew Westman

Type of sponsor/funding body Developer

Name of sponsor/funding body Grosvenor West End Properties Ltd

Project archives

Physical Archive Exists? No

Digital Archive recipient LAARC

Digital Archive ID BAL11

Digital Contents "Survey","other"

Digital Media available "Images raster / digital photography","Spreadsheets","Text"

Paper Archive recipient LAARC

Paper Archive ID BAL11

Paper Contents "Survey","other"

Paper Media available "Correspondence","Drawing","Map","Microfilm","Plan","Report","Section","Survey"

Project bibliography 1

Publication type Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)

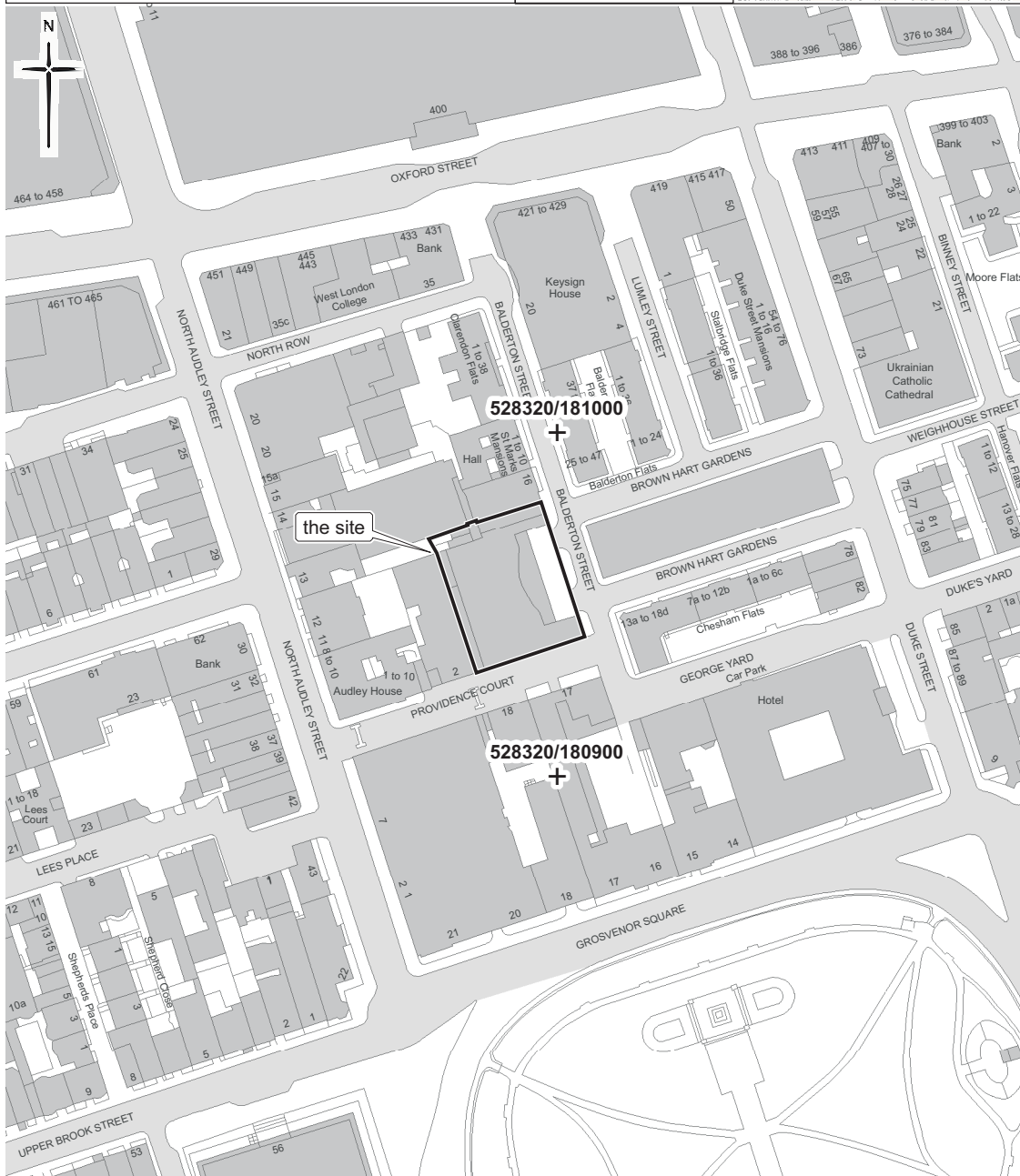
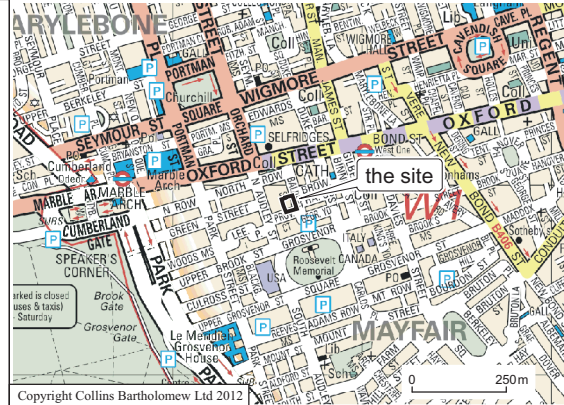
Title Basement Vaults at No.8 Balderton Street, London W1: Standing building survey

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Scale 1:2,000 @ A4



Fig 1 Site location

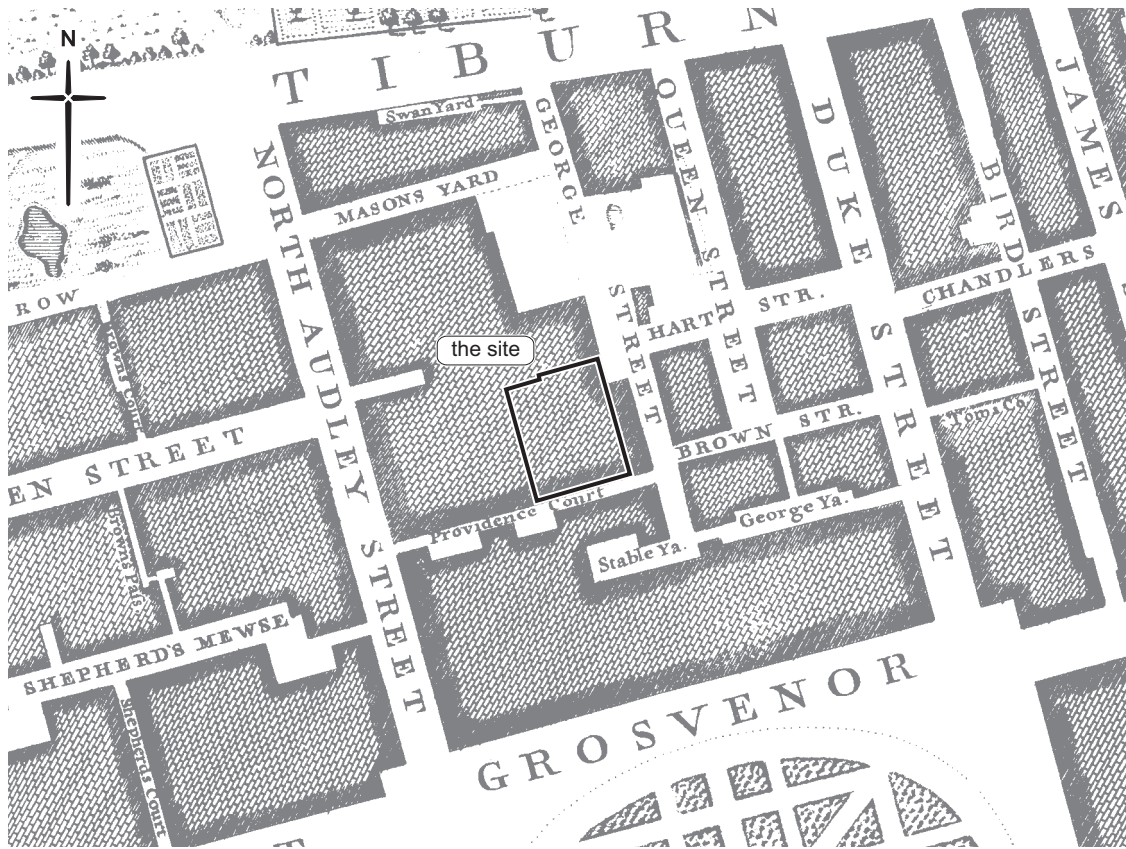


Fig 2 The site in 1746 (Rocque)

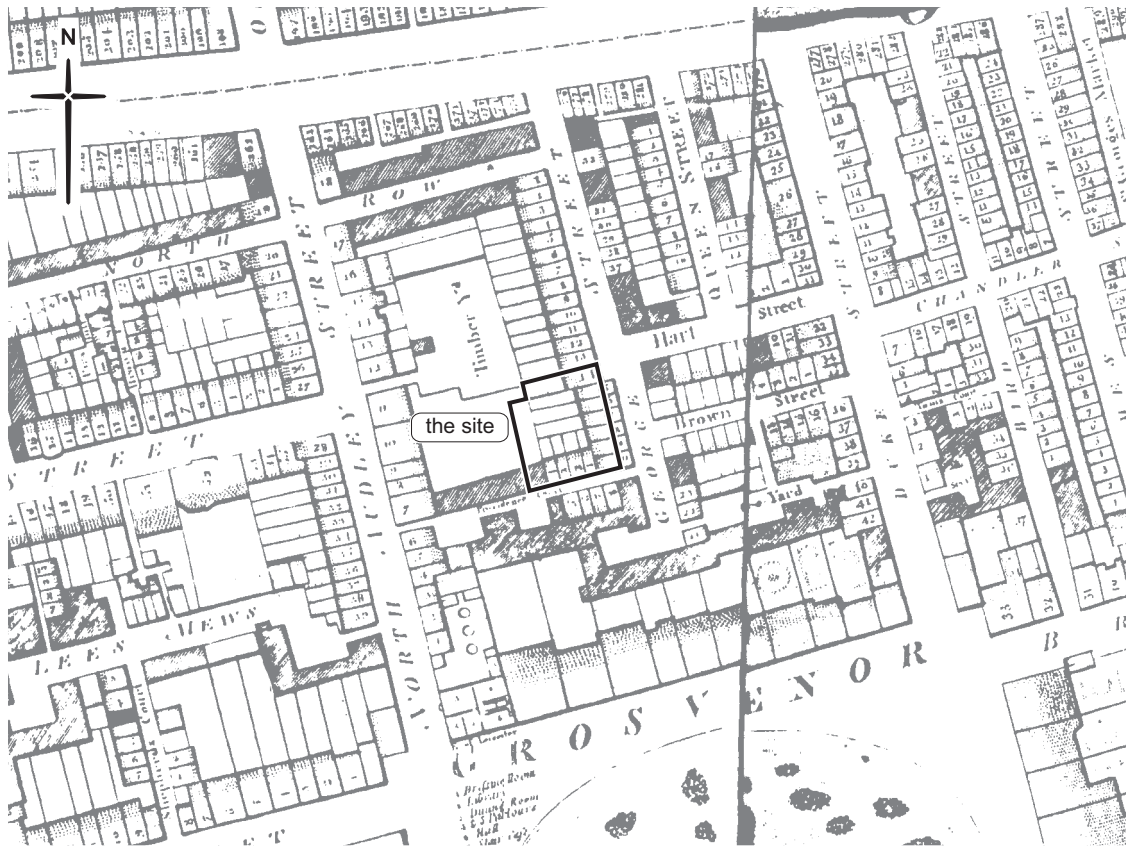


Fig 3 The site in 1799 (Horwood)

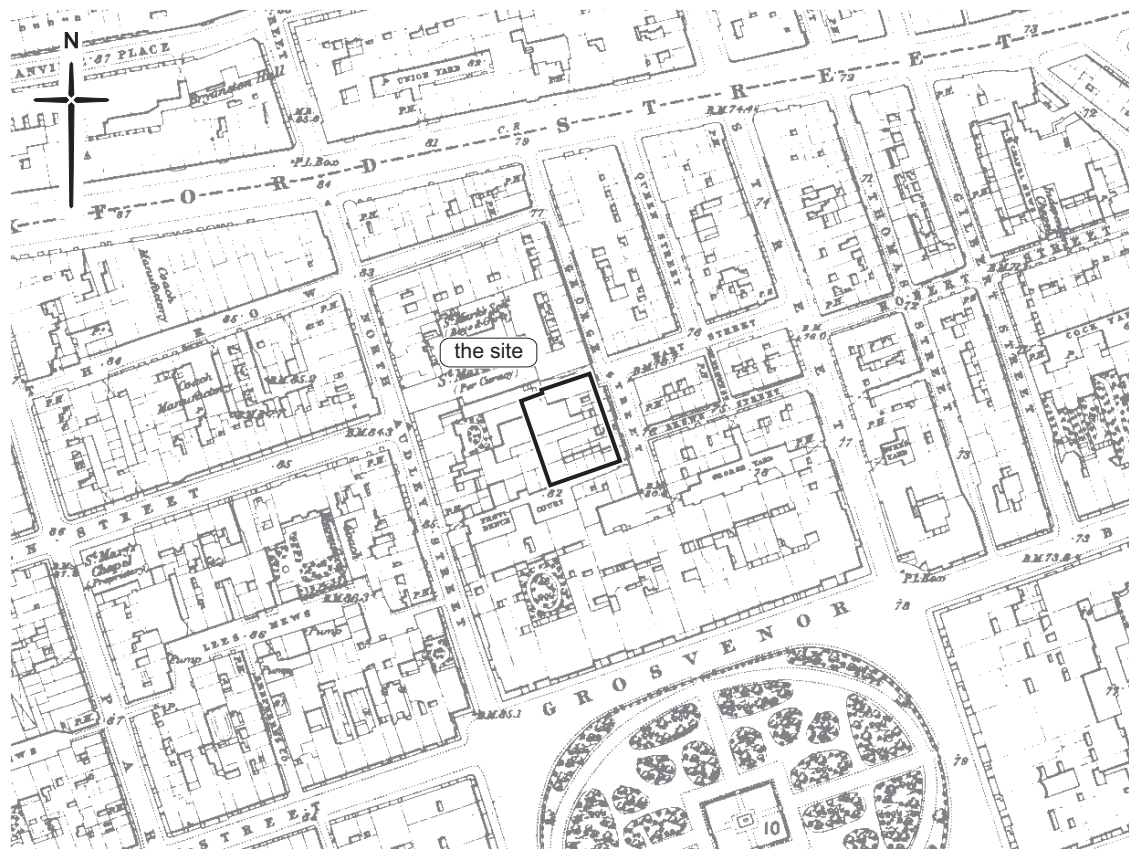


Fig 4 The site in 1870 (OS)



Fig 5 The site in 1894 (OS)

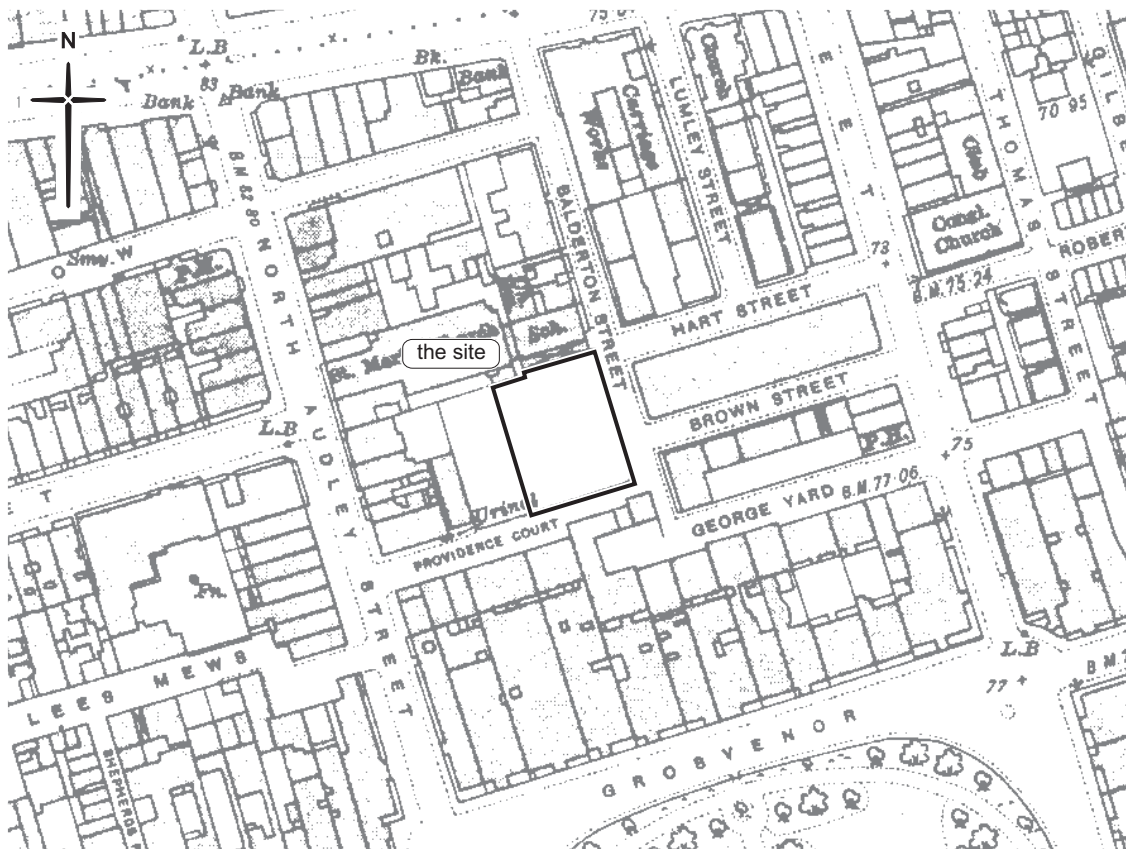


Fig 6 The site in 1914 (OS)

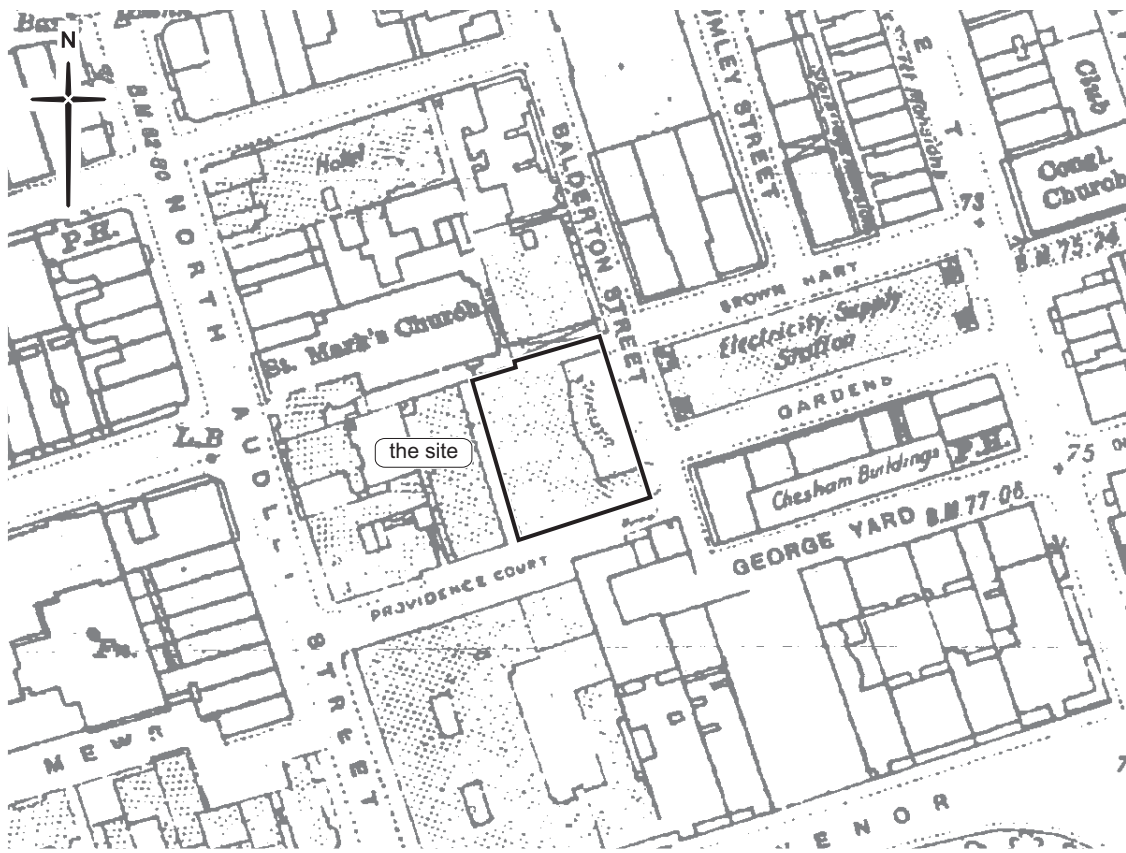


Fig 7 The site in 1934 (OS)

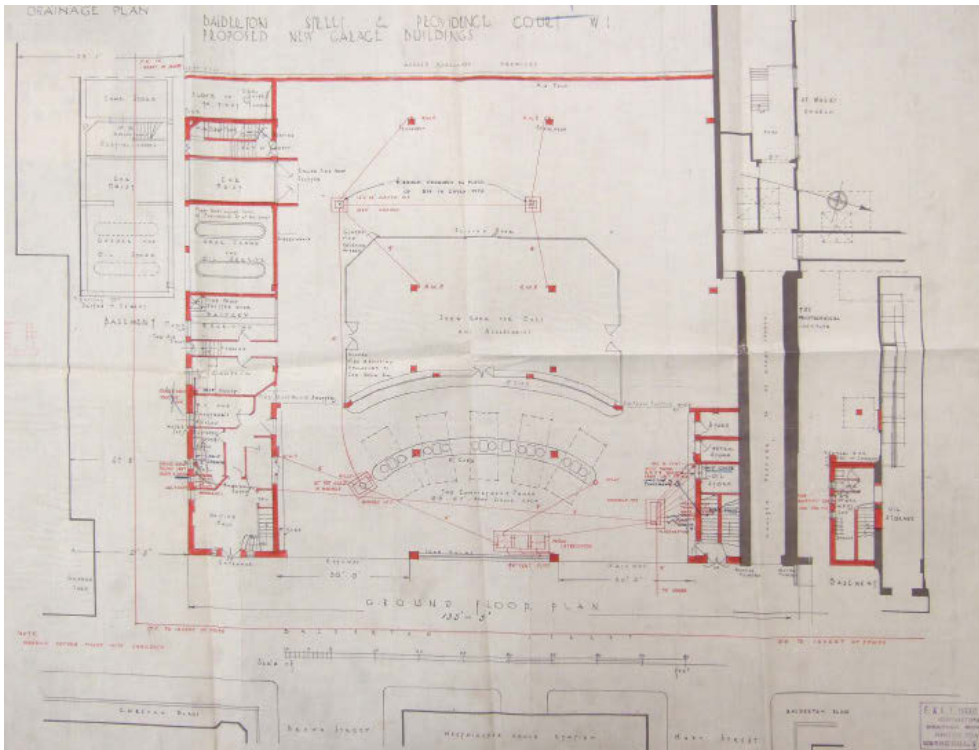


Fig 8 Architect's plan of the ground floor and, on the extreme right, the basement, 1925 (Heyne Tillett Steel 2009)

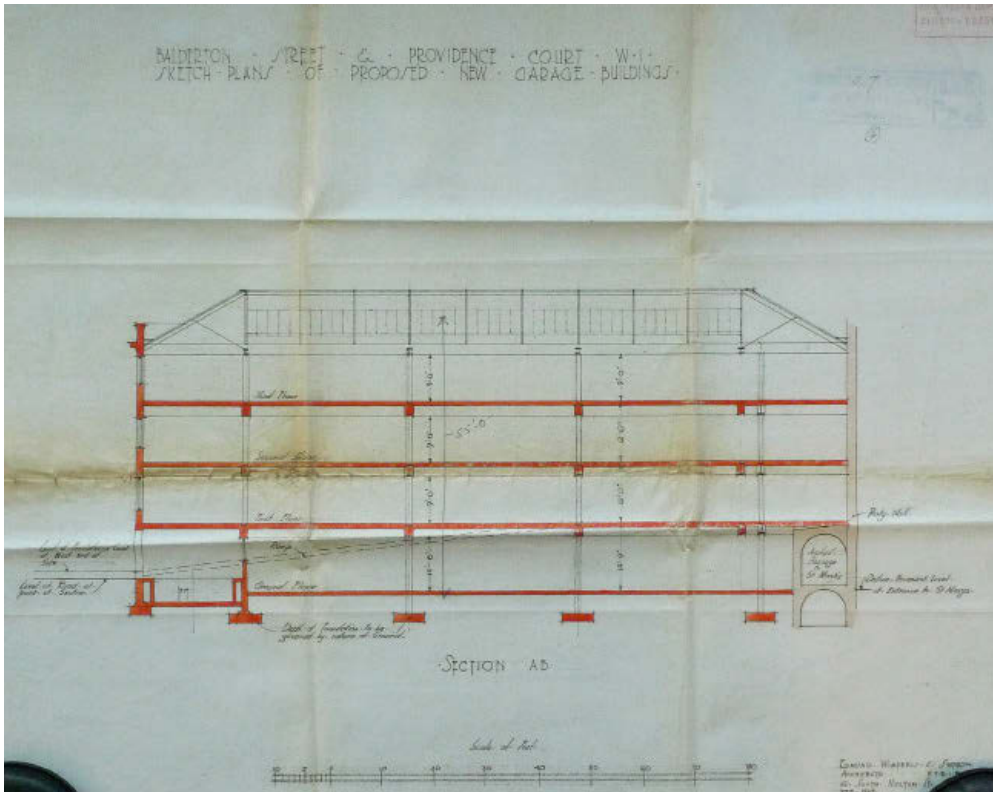


Fig 9 Architect's section from south to north, looking west, 1925 (Heyne Tillett Steel 2009)

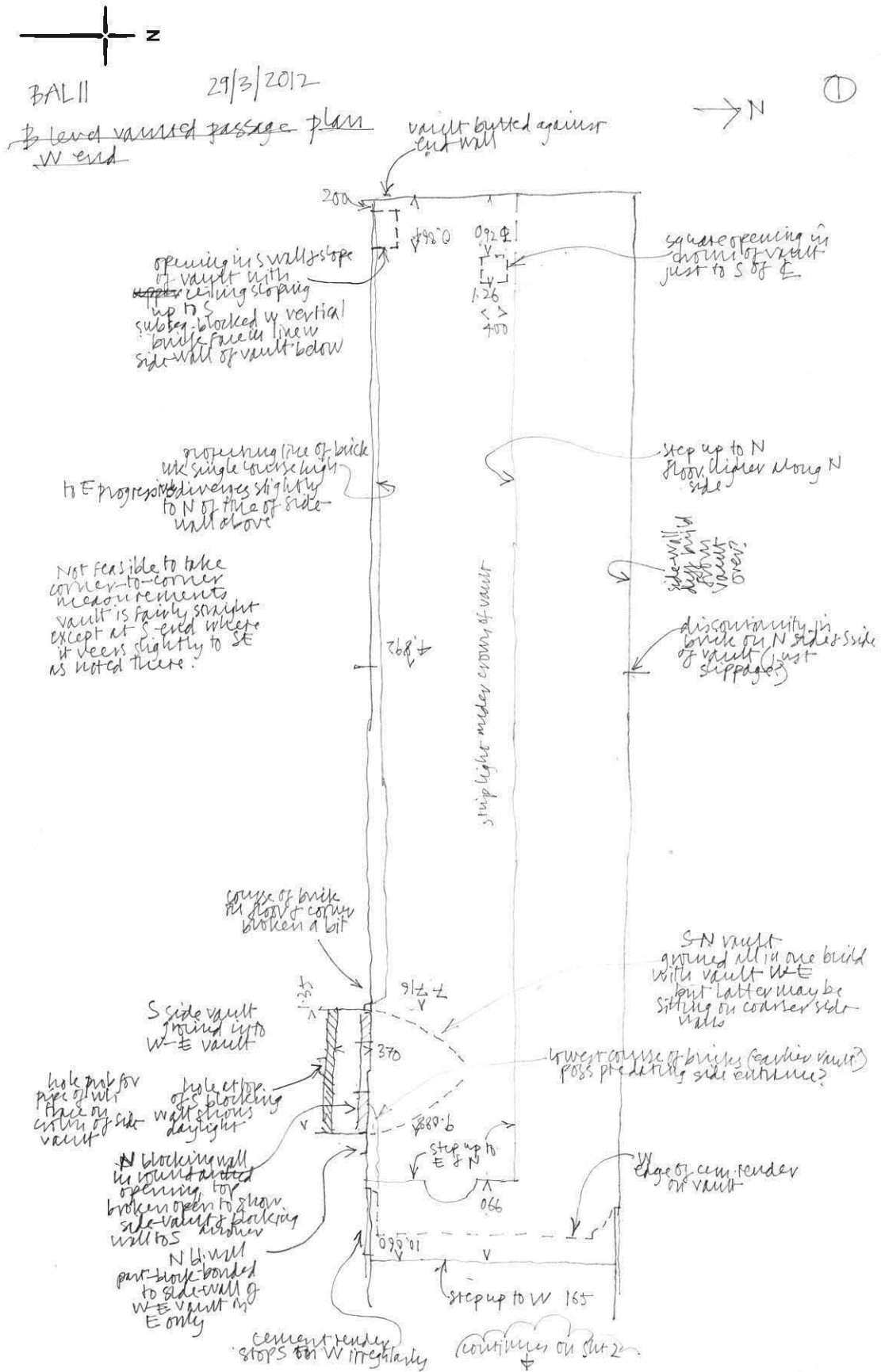


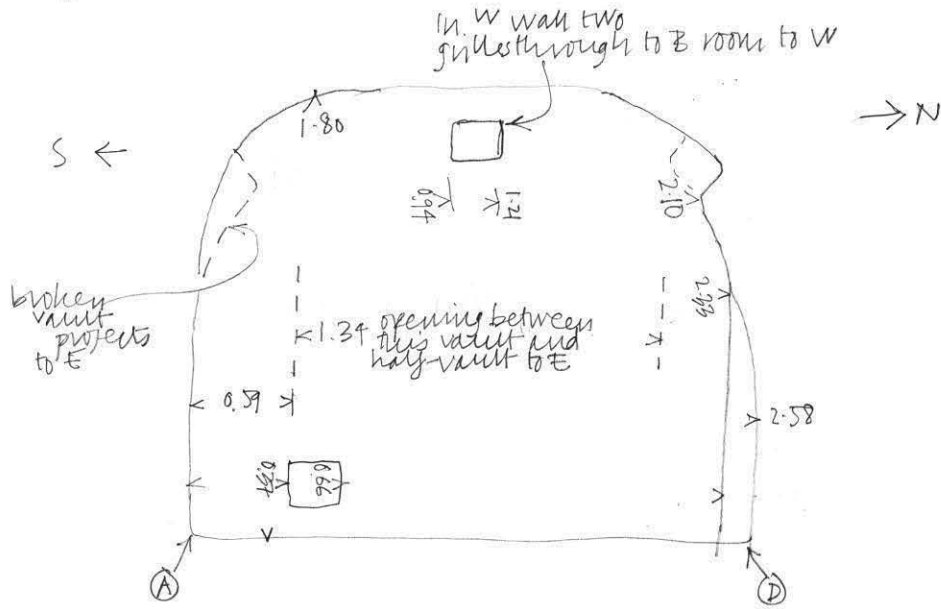
Fig 11 Plan of the basement vaults (west half), drawn on site



BAL II 29/3/2012

9

sect. elev. truncated vault to S



sect. elev. truncated vault & half-vault to S

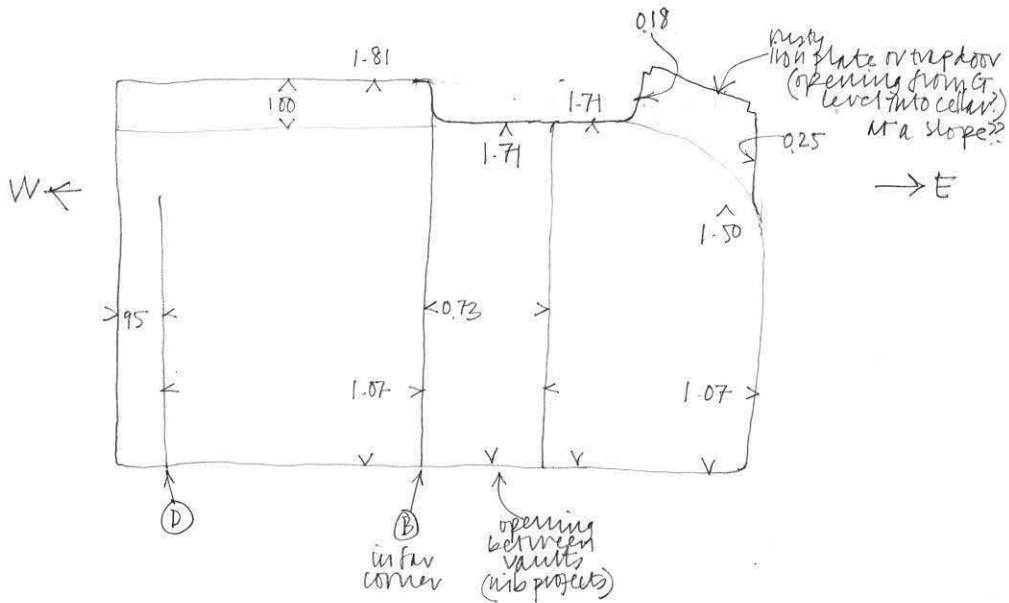


Fig 12 Sections through the southern vault and half-vaults, drawn on site



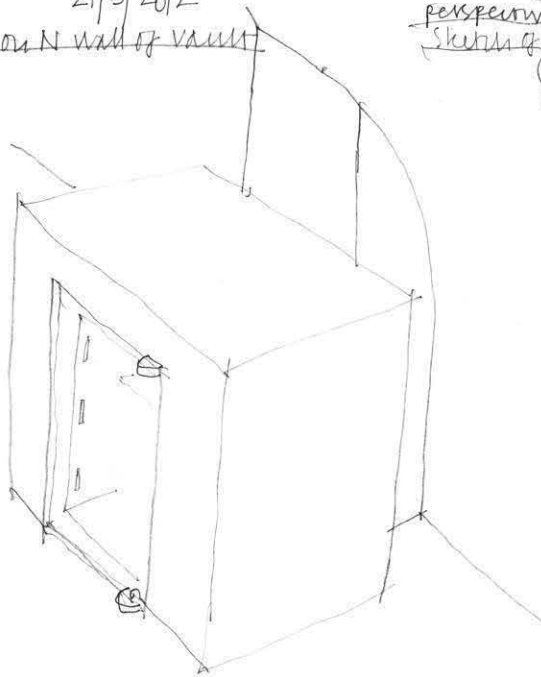
BAL11
 Built-in safe on N wall of vault

29/3/2012

perspective
 sketch of safe looking NW

②

(door removed
 buttraces added to wall
 behind safe set directly
 in front for added fire
 protection?)



S ←

→ N

brick added to sides & rear
 & then cemented - best
 top not so well protected

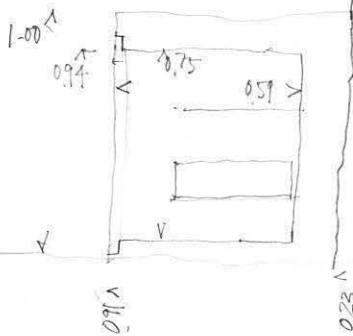
safe & N wall of vault

section elev

A1.42
 (1.56 on
 W side)

W ←

→ E



B 270 }
 T 140 } cash boxes
 L 425 }

buttraces behind

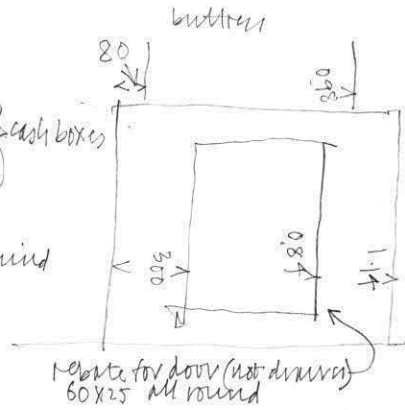


Fig 13 Section through the northern vault and details of built-in safe, drawn on site



Fig 14 The half-vault, looking north (MOLA image 19)



Fig 15 Connection between the northern vault and the half-vault, looking north-east (MOLA image 25)



Fig 16 The western half of the northern vault, looking south-west (MOLA image 10)



Fig 17 The northern vault looking west, showing an opening on the south groined into the vault, later blocked, and the entrance of 1925-26 (MOLA image 35)



Fig 18 The east end of the southern vault, looking south, showing broken south wall (MOLA image 14)



Fig 19 A built-in safe in the northern vault, looking north (MOLA image 34)



Fig 20 Exterior of the garage on Balderton Street and the east opening to the ground-level passage to St Mark's Church, looking south-west (Heyne Tillett Steel 2009)