

***London Safe Deposit Company Vault
Dorland House, Regent Street
London, SW1***

City of Westminster

A Standing Buildings Photographic Survey Report

National Grid reference: 529616 180552

Planning reference 12/08886/FULL: Condition 33

Site code: SJE13

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September 2013

Museum of London Archaeology

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Summary

This report presents a summary of a standing building photographic survey undertaken by Museum of London Archaeology (MOLA) of the London Safe Deposit Company's vault in the lower basement of Dorland House, Regent Street, London SW1. The survey commissioned by the Crown Estate was required as a condition of planning consent for redevelopment of the buildings on the site (application 12/08886/FULL, condition 33). The survey took place on 06 September 2013.

Dorland House was constructed in 1924-28 to designs by JJ Joass. The London Safe Deposit Company's vault was fitted out by the Chubb Lock company and opened by Sir Josiah Stamp on 14th December 1931. A notable client of the company was Queen Mary, the wife of King George V, who retained a safe box in the vault between March 1932 and January 1947.

The vault occupied space in the lower basement below 18 – 20 Regent Street. The vaults were located in two interconnected rooms on the south-east side of the basement, whilst a reception area and office accommodation was located to their north-west.

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1 Introduction

1.1 Site background

It is proposed to demolish the Grade II Listed Dorland House, leaving the Regent Street façade. The works would include the vaults of the London Safe Deposit company.

1.2 Planning Background

A previous desk-based Historic Environment Assessment of the archaeological potential of the site carried out by MOLA (2012) outlined the planning background to the site.

Dorland House is Grade II Listed. Condition 33 on planning application 12/08886/FULL required “before demolition of the sub-basement to Dorland House takes place you must apply to us for approval of a photographic record of the London Safe Deposit Company’s vaults. The photographic survey shall be in accordance with English Heritage’s “Understanding Historic Buildings: a Guide to Good Recording Practice.” You must not remove any part of the interior of this vault until we have approved what you have sent us.”

1.3 Aims of the survey and method of recording

1.3.1 Aims

The aims of the survey were to make a photographic record of the vaults prior to the development works. The survey was to fulfil the requirements outlined in section 5.5 of English Heritage’s “Understanding Historic Buildings: a Guide to Good Recording Practice.”

1.3.2 Method

The survey of the structure on site took place on 06 September 2013 prior to demolition works starting. The photographs were taken by the MOLA photographer, Maggie Cox. The photographs were taken using a Nikon D3 digital camera.

The photographs will be deposited with the London Archaeological Archive and Research Centre (LAARC) under the site code SJE13. This site code will also be used to archive an archaeological watching brief on the development.

2 Historical background

Dorland House was constructed in 1924-28 to designs by JJ Joass. The London Safe Deposit Company’s vault was fitted out by the Chubb Lock Company and opened by Sir Josiah Stamp on 14th December 1931. He was given free use of strong box 1000 for his life time, and a commemorative plaque was attached to his box (fig 7). A notable client of the company was Queen Mary, the wife of King George V, who retained a safe box (506) in the vault between March 1932 and January 1947. A commemorative plaque had also been attached to her box (fig 6)

3 Summary description of the vault

3.1 The reception area

The reception area was located on the north-west side of the basement. It consisted of a number of rooms opening off from a corridor (fig 2). It included stairs and a pair of lifts to the upper floors of Dorland House. Historic photographs of the vault shown to MOLA by the London Safe Deposit Company show that the walls were originally tiled. The area was redecorated or reformed at some time to provide a reception area clad in timber planking. The style of a sign above the reception desk might indicate a date in the 1960s for this work (fig 3).

3.2 The north-east strong room

The strong rooms, or vaults, were divided into two rooms of very different character. They were entered from the reception area by way of a 20ton steel security door with a combination lock system (fig 4). The door entered into the north-eastern strong room. This was the principal room and was decorated in Art-deco style (fig 5). It was lined by deposit boxes with two further banks of boxes in the centre of the room of varying size and specification. Each box was numbered. Queen Mary used box number 506 in the north-east wall. The walls were clad in highly burnished stainless steel. The south-west wall formed the partition with the plainer vault room to the south-west. This wall was not provided with deposit boxes, but had a central doorway with a grilled door. The door was flanked by full length mirrors. The room was lit by high level strips of lights behind frosted glass panels at ceiling cove level.

3.3 The south-west strong room.

The south-west strong room was much plainer, the walls being plastered (fig 8). It had a central corridor with three cubicles, lined with large deposit boxes, at the north-east end of the room. There were two large, walk-in, strong rooms to the south-west. The south-west end of the corridor ended in a cross corridor. Four further walk-in strong rooms were present on the south-west side of the cross corridor (fig 9).

3.4 Archiving

The site records comprise a total of 49 photographic images in digital colour format (TIFF). 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 SJE13.

3.5 Copyright

Museum of London Archaeology retains copyright in the text and original illustrations of this document, and grants the client, The Crown Estates, and their agents a licence to copy and make further use of the text and original artwork in connection with any redevelopment of the present site, provided that their origin is credited.

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4 Acknowledgements

This report was commissioned by The Crown Estates whom MOLA wishes to thank. In particular the author wishes to thank Robert Hopkins of GVA Second London Wall for co-ordinating the project, David Williamson of Hanover Cube LLP for arranging access, and to the staff of the London Safe Deposit Company for their cheerful assistance on site.

5 Bibliography

DCLG [Department of Communities and Local Government], 2012 *National Planning Policy Framework*

English Heritage. (2006) *Understanding Historic Buildings: a guide to good recording practice*. UK: English Heritage.

Institute for Archaeologists (IFA), (2008) *Standard and guidance for archaeological investigation of standing buildings or structures*

6 Appendix 1: OASIS archaeological report form

6.1 OASIS ID: molas1-158804

Project details

Project name	London Safe Deposit Company Vault Dorland House, Regent Street London, SW1
Short description of the project	London Safe Deposit Company Vault Dorland House, Regent Street London, SW1 City of Westminster A Standing Buildings Photographic Survey National Grid reference: 529616 180552 Planning reference 12/08886/FULL: Condition 33 Site code: SJE13 a standing building photographic survey undertaken by Museum of London Archaeology (MOLA) of the London Safe Deposit Company's vault in the lower basement of Dorland House, Regent Street, London SW1. The survey commissioned by the Crown Estate was required as a condition of planning consent for redevelopment of the buildings on the site (application 12/08886/FULL, condition 33). The survey took place on 06 September 2013. Dorland House was constructed in 1924-28 to designs by JJ Joass. The London Safe Deposit Company's vault was fitted out by the Chubb Lock company and opened by Sir Josiah Stamp on 14th December 1931. A notable client of the company was Queen Mary, the wife of King George V, who retained a safe box in the vault between March 1932 and January 1947. The vault occupied space in the lower basement below 18 - 20 Regent Street. The vaults were located in two interconnected rooms on the south-east side of the basement, whilst a reception area and office accommodation were located to their north-west.
Project dates	Start: 06-09-2013 End: 06-09-2013
Previous/future work	No / Not known
Any associated project reference codes	SJE13 - Sitecode
Type of project	Recording project
Site status	None
Current Land use	Industry and Commerce 4 - Storage and warehousing
Monument type	SAFE DEPOSIT VAULT Modern
Investigation type	"Field observation","Recorded Observation"
Prompt	Planning condition

Project location

Country	England
Site location	GREATER LONDON CITY OF WESTMINSTER CITY OF WESTMINSTER London Safe Deposit Company Vault Dorland House, Regent Street
Postcode	SW1
Study area	3024.00 Square metres

Site coordinates TQ 529616 180552 50 0 50 56 27 N 000 10 38 E Point

Project creators

Name of Organisation	MOLA
Project brief originator	MOLA
Project design originator	MOLA
Project director/manager	Michael Smith
Project supervisor	Michael Smith
Type of sponsor/funding body	Crown Estate
Name of sponsor/funding body	Crown Estate

Project archives

Physical Archive Exists?	No
Digital Archive Exists?	No
Paper Archive recipient	LAARC
Paper Archive ID	SJE13
Paper Media available	"Correspondence","Photograph","Report","Unpublished Text"

Project bibliography 1

Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	London Safe Deposit Company Vault Dorland House, Regent Street London, SW1 City of Westminster A Standing Buildings Photographic Survey Report
Author(s)/Editor(s)	Smith, M.
Date	2013
Issuer or publisher	Museum of London Archaeology
Place of issue or publication	London
Description	This report presents a summary of a standing building photographic survey undertaken by Museum of London Archaeology (MOLA) of the London Safe Deposit Company's vault in the lower basement of Dorland House, Regent Street, London SW1. The survey commissioned by the Crown Estate was required as a condition of planning consent for redevelopment of the buildings on the site (application 12/08886/FULL, condition 33). The survey took place on 06 September 2013. A copy of this report will be deposited in

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Entered by Azizul Karim (akarim@mola.org.uk)

Entered on 10 September 2013

7 List of photographs taken on site

Image No. / File	Description	Direction of View
133713001	Entrance to Strong rooms	SE
133713002	Letter from Queen Mary's secretary in the strong room door	NE
133713003	Interior of the strong room door	NW
133713004	Side of strong room door	SW
133713005	Strong room mechanism	NE
133713006	Strong room lobby	NE
133713007	Principal strong room corridor	SW
133713008	Principal strong room corridor	SW
133713009	Principal strong room corridor	SW
133713010	Plaque on Queen Mary's box	NE
133713011	Plaque on Queen Mary's box	NE
133713012	Detail of NE boxes	NE
133713013	Emergency telephone booth	SW
133713014	South side of principal strong room	NE
133713015	Detail of boxes on SW bay	NW
133713016	Plaque of Josiah Stamp's box	SE
133713017	Plaque of Josiah Stamp's box	SE
133713018	Detail of boxes on SE wall	SE
133713019	Detail of boxes on NE bay	NW
133713020	Detail of boxes on NE bay	NW
133713021	Detail of boxes on NE bay	NW
133713022	North-east bay	N
133713023	Grill door between strong rooms	NW
133713024	Side bay in SW strong room	SE
133713025	Side bay in SW strong room	SE
133713026	Corridor in SW strong room	SW
133713027	NW bay in SW strong room	N
133713028	North side of south-west strong room	NW
133713029	Typical strong room at south-west end	SW
133713030	Chubb & Son's label on strong room door	W
133713031	Typical strong room detail	SW
133713032	Doors to strong rooms at SW end	NW
133713033	Exterior of strong room door	SW
133713034	Doors to strong rooms at SW end	S
133713035	South-east bay at north-east end of south-west strong room	SE
133713036	South-east bay at north-east end of south-west strong room	SE
133713037	Corridor in SW strong room	NE
133713038	North side of principal strong room	NE

Image No. / File	Description	Direction of View
133713039	North side of principal strong room	SW
133713040	Details of combination locks on north-east wall	NE
133713041	Details of combination locks on north-east wall	NE
133713042	Grill door on interior of strong room locks	
133713043	Grill door on interior of strong room locks	
133713044	Humidity gauge on north-east face of south-east bay	SW
133713045	Signage and clock by strong room door in the reception	SE
133713046	Reception desk	S
133713047	Reception desk	S
133713048	Grill door to strong room lobby (open)	NW
133713049	Grill door to strong room lobby (closed)	NW

8 Figures

Figure 2 is reproduced with the permission of the Crown Estates. A representative selection of the survey photographs are appended here.

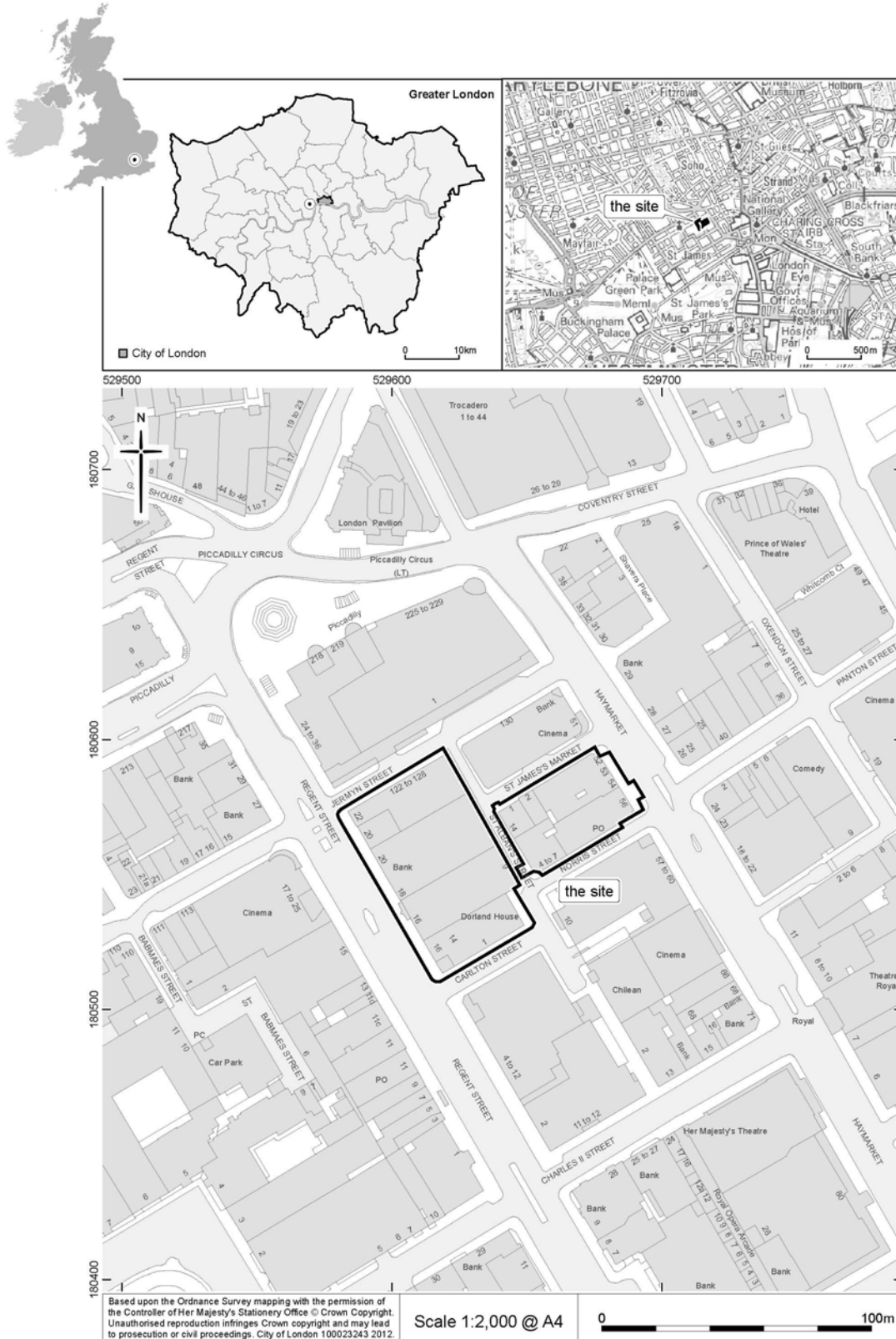


Figure 1. Site location plan

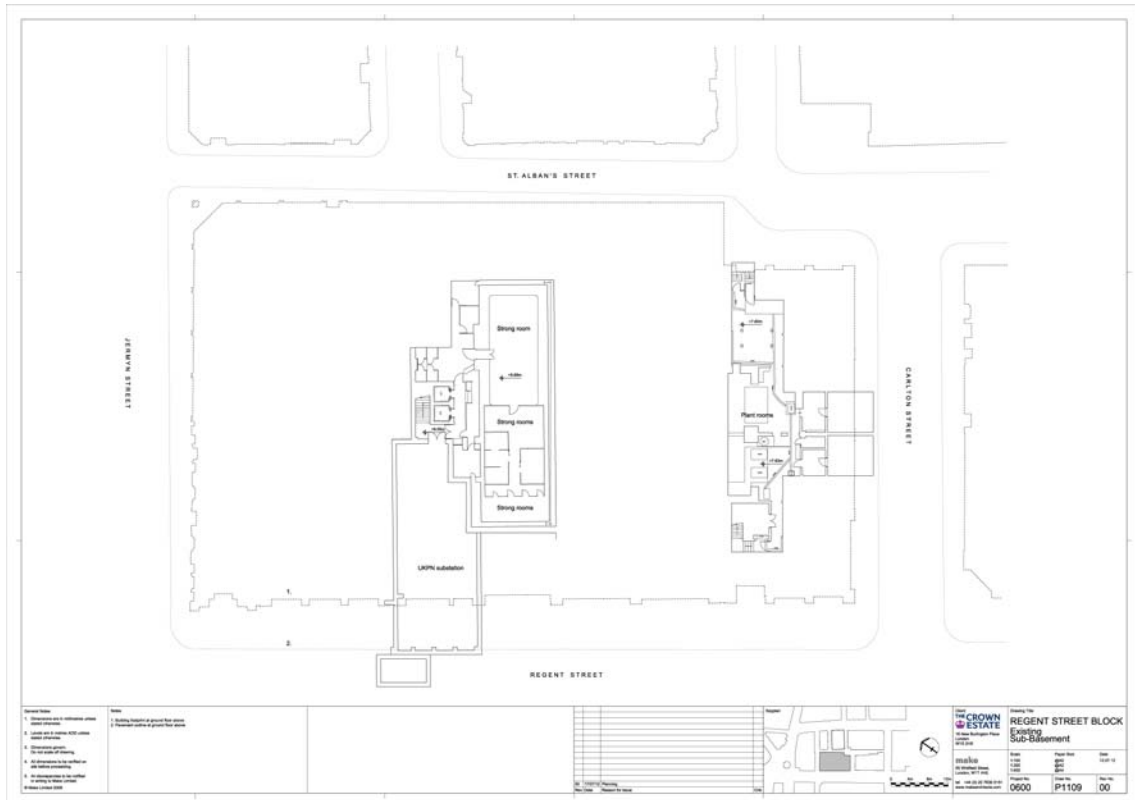


Figure 2. Basement plan.



Figure 3. Reception desk, looking south.



Figure 4. Strong room entrance and 20 ton door, looking south-east.



Figure 5. North-west side of principal strong room, looking south-west.



Figure 6. Queen Mary's strong box, looking north-east.



Figure 7. Josiah Stamp's strong box, looking south-east.



Figure 8. South-western strong room, looking south-west.



Figure 9. Typical strong room at south-west end, looking south-west.