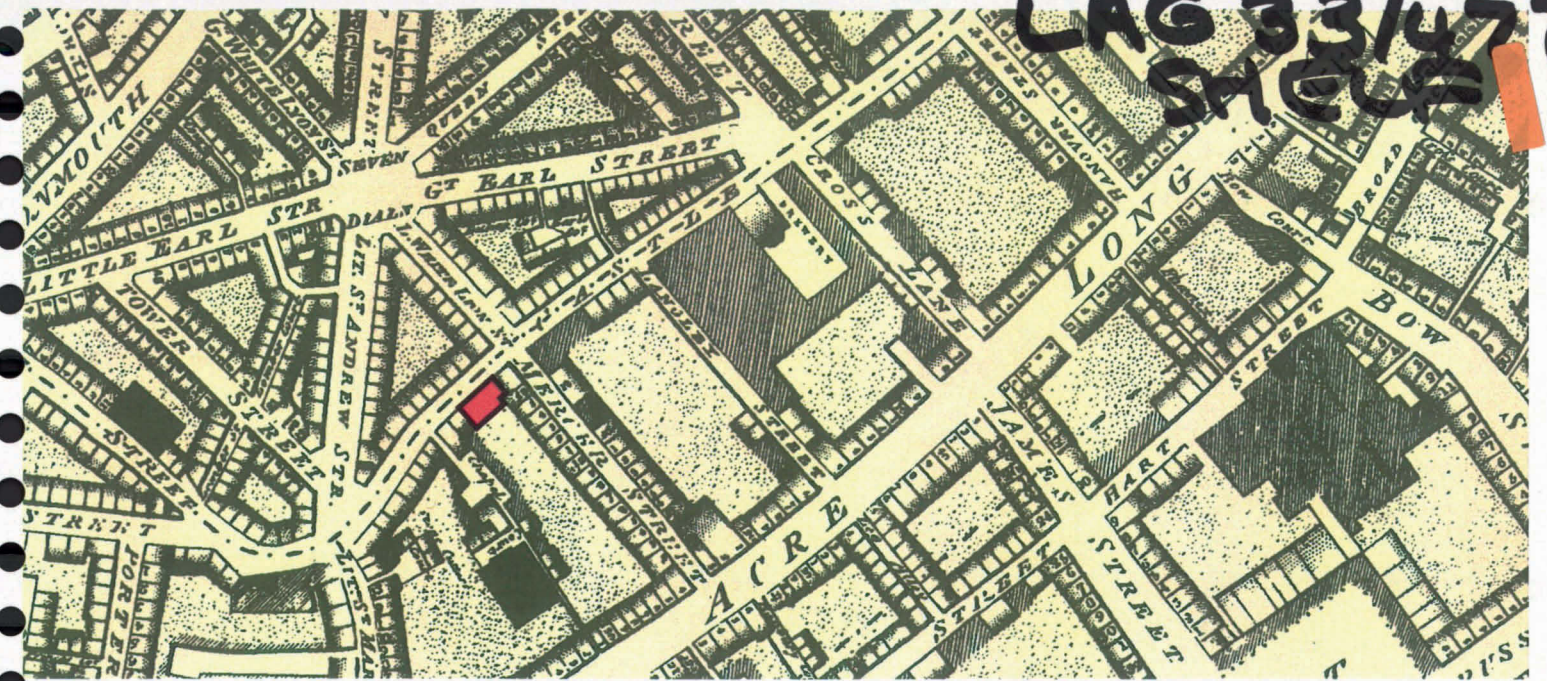


LAG 33/47
SHELF



10-14 SHELTON STREET
London
WC2

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SO: L077479
L078218

City of Westminster
Watching brief report
October 2004



MUSEUM OF LONDON
Archaeology Service

Qe

10-14 SHELTON STREET
London
WC2

City of Westminster

Watching brief report

Site Code: SOS04
National Grid Reference: 530104 181019

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Summary (non-technical)

This report has been commissioned by John Stebbing Architect on behalf of the client in order to record and assess the results of a watching brief carried out at 10-14 Shelton Street, London WC2.

As part of the development, which includes the construction of an extension at basement and ground floor levels to the rear of the property, five test pits were excavated and recorded between 10/8/2004 and 20/8/2004.

A brick well/soakaway was recorded in test pit 1 in the yard area to the rear of the property. Natural brickearth [6] was observed in test pit 2, overlying natural sand and gravel [5] and recorded at 18.43m OD. Natural clayey, sand and gravel deposits [5] was observed in test pits 1 and 2 and recorded at heights of 18.37m OD. The highest survival of archaeological deposits occurred at 18.38m OD.

Table Of Contents

1	Introduction	5
1.1	Site background	5
1.2	The planning and legislative framework	5
1.3	Planning background	5
1.4	Origin and scope of the report	5
1.5	Aims and objectives	6
2	Topographical and historical background	10
2.1	Topography	10
2.2	Prehistoric	10
2.3	Roman	10
2.4	Saxon	11
2.5	Medieval	11
2.6	Post-medieval	12
3	The watching brief	14
3.1	Methodology	14
3.2	Results of the watching brief	15
4	Potential of archaeology	19
4.1	Original research aims	19
4.2	Significance of the data	19
5	Publication and archiving	20
6	Conclusions	20
7	Acknowledgements	21
8	Bibliography	21

9 NMR OASIS archaeological report form 23

9.1 OASIS ID: molas1-4317 23

List Of Illustrations

Front cover: Detail from Richard Horwood's map of 1799

Fig 1 Site location	7
Fig 2 Test pit locations	8
Fig 3 Detail from John Rocque's map of 1746	9
Fig 4 Detail from Richard Horwood's map of 1799	9
Fig 5 Test pits 1-5	13

1 Introduction

1.1 Site background

The watching brief took place at 10–14 Shelton Street, London WC2, hereafter called 'the site'. The site is situated on the south side of Shelton Street and is bordered by a car park to the west and a Club to the east (see Fig 1). The centre of the site lies at OS National Grid Reference 530104 181019. The level of the basement slab is 18.67m OD, the level of the yard surface to the rear of the building is 18.63m OD. Modern ground level immediately adjacent to the site is 21.13m OD. The site code is SOS04.

A *Method Statement for an archaeological watching brief* was previously prepared by MoLAS, which covers the whole area of the site (Howe 2004). This document should be referred to for the initial assessment of the archaeological potential of the site and the design for the watching brief, which was eventually carried out.

1.2 The planning and legislative framework

The legislative and planning framework in which the archaeological exercise took place was summarised in the *Method Statement*, which formed the project design for the watching brief (see Howe 2004, Section 1.2).

1.3 Planning background

This archaeological watching brief has been commissioned from the Museum of London Archaeological Service (MoLAS) by the client Artinville Limited, in response to an archaeological condition attached to planning permission to redevelop part of the site.

1.4 Origin and scope of the report

The report has been prepared within the terms of the relevant Standard specified by the Institute of Field Archaeologists (IFA 2001).

The purpose of the watching brief was to determine whether archaeological remains or features were present on the site and, if so, to record the nature and extent of such remains. A number of more site-specific research aims and objectives were established in the preceding *Method Statement* (see Howe 2004, Section 2.2), and are outlined in the following section.

The purpose of the present report is to analyse the results of the excavation against the original research aims, and to suggest what further work, including analysis or publication (if any), should now take place.

1.5 Aims and objectives

The following research aims and objectives were established in the *Method Statement* for the watching brief (Section 2.2):

This statement sets out the methods used and approaches taken in dealing with the archaeological resource of the site. The detailed methodology is set in the context of the methods and approaches which are considered most appropriate for an Archaeological Watching Brief on sites in Greater London, in accordance with the advice contained in the English Heritage (GLAAS), *Archaeological Guidance Papers 1-5* (revised 1998).

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

The limited nature of the proposed works and the watching brief upon them makes it unreasonable to establish many specific archaeological research objectives. The archaeological brief will determine whether archaeological deposits/features survive on the site. Where archaeological deposits/features exist on site and are likely to be impacted on by the proposed development they will be archaeologically recorded and excavated prior to the works taking place. Nevertheless, in addition, a few research themes were outlined:

- What was the level of natural topography?
- Is there evidence of the Cock and Pye ditch or related features associated with the marshy area along Shelton Street?
- Is there evidence for Early Saxon activity on the site?
- Is there evidence for Middle Saxon activity on the site?
- The site appears to remain undeveloped into the later post-medieval period. What evidence is there for the development of the site?

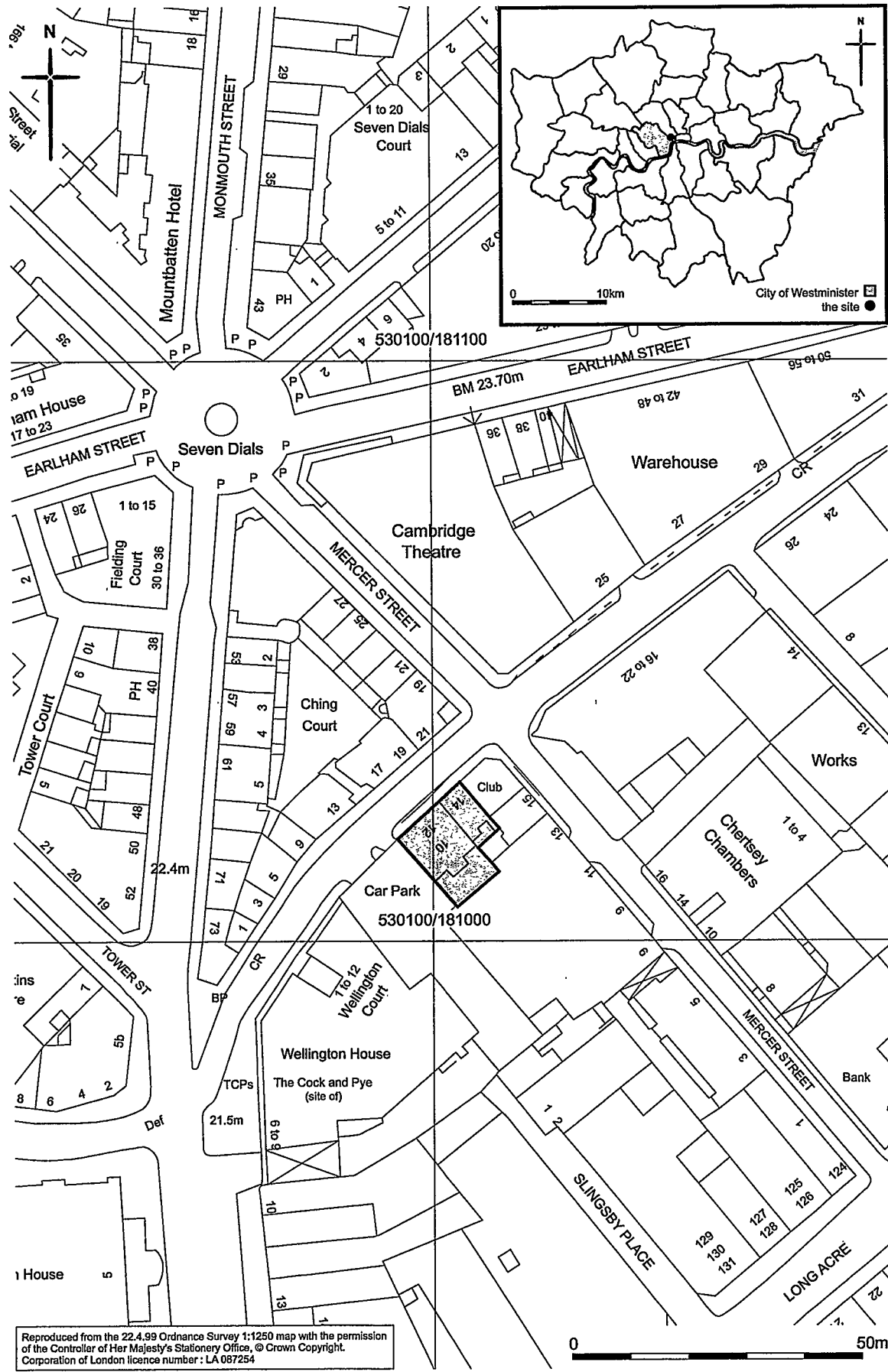


Fig 1 Site location



Fig 2 Test pit locations

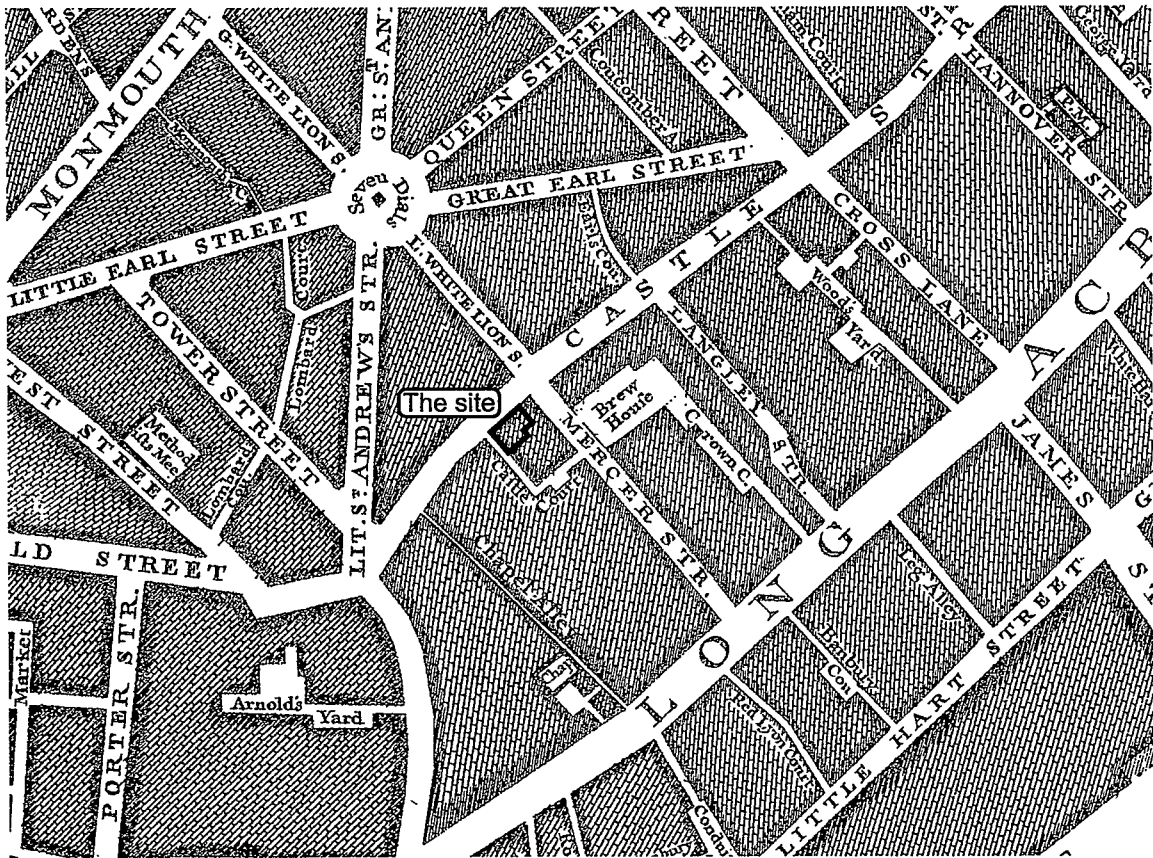


Fig 3 Detail from John Rocque's map of 1746

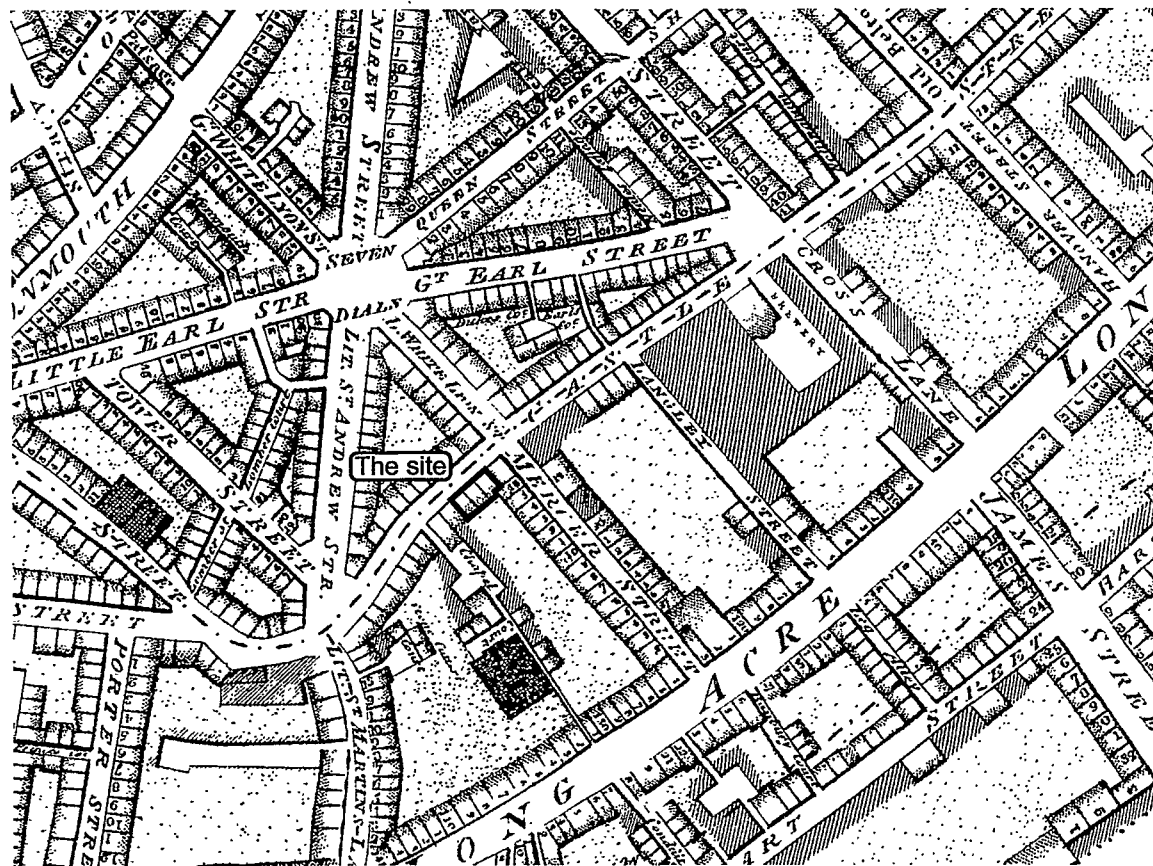


Fig 4 Detail from Richard Horwood's map of 1799

2 Topographical and historical background

2.1 Topography

To the west and south-west of the site the modern ground level slopes gently down, reflecting the natural topography, ie, a slope down towards the River Thames. The land also slopes down towards the line taken by a former watercourse known as the Cock and Pye ditch, which ran southwards along St Martin's Lane to St Martin-in-the-Fields, and from there down to the River Thames. Documentary evidence suggests that during the medieval and early post-medieval periods the area of the site was marshy, and was probably part of the Cock and Pye ditch.

Street level in Shelton Street to the east of the site is at 22.40m OD and to the west of the site in Monmouth Street it is also 22.40m OD. To the southwest in Upper St Martin's Lane the street level is 21.50m OD indicating the slope down to the Thames.

2.2 Prehistoric

Chance finds of Palaeolithic worked flint have been found in Floral Street and James Street. A Neolithic stone axe from Long Acre, to the north of the site and a flint assemblage from Bedfordbury (site code PEA87) to the south may represent primary deposition.

2.3 Roman

Evidence for Roman occupation in this area is limited to occasional stray finds, and re-used and redeposited Roman objects (especially ceramic building material) recovered from nearby archaeological excavation sites such as Jubilee Hall, Maiden Lane and the Royal Opera House (site codes JUB85, MAI85 and ROP95).

2.4 Saxon

During the Middle Saxon period the site lay in the NW part of Lundenwic, which was an important port, in a network of trading settlements around the coast of North-West Europe.

The origins of Lundenwic are still unclear, although it is thought that a modest settlement may have been established in the area during the 5th or 6th centuries. Evidence for this putative Early Saxon settlement has only recently come to light, and includes a small quantity of pottery from 15–17 Long Acre (site code LCR99), 8–9 Long Acre (Site code LGC00) and animal bone with a radiocarbon date of AD 432–644 from 24 Endell Street (site code: EDL98). Late 6th-century and 7th-century activity in the area is indicated by stray finds and two small groups of inhumation burials. One group of burials was located at St Martin-in-the-Fields, where sarcophagi containing two glass palm cups and a spearhead were discovered during the construction of the church in the 1720s. The other group comprises at least 14 scattered burials to the west of Drury Lane, five of which have been dated to the 7th century.

Excavations in Lundenwic, in particular at the Royal Opera House, have revealed the remains of gravel streets, timber buildings, wells, rubbish pits, cesspits and middens (Malcolm and Bowsher 2003). They have also yielded numerous artefacts indicating cloth production, bone and antler working, and metalworking (iron, copper alloy and silver) on a modest scale. In addition, evidence has been found for regional and long distance trade in finished goods, raw materials, and foodstuffs. Trade with the Continent is mainly indicated by Rhenish quernstones and pottery from northern France, and to a lesser extent from the Low Countries and the Rhineland. The archaeological and documentary evidence suggests that Lundenwic developed into a major settlement in the late 7th century, and that its heyday was in the 8th century. However, it was abandoned in the mid 9th century. Probably as the result of the Viking attacks on London documented in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*.

2.5 Medieval

In the medieval period the site lies to the north of the garden of the Convent of St Peter's, Westminster (hence 'Covent Garden' today), first referred to in a document attributed to the reign of King John (1199–1216). The garden was divided into orchard, arable, meadow and pasture land. Long Acre was a narrow strip of market gardens owned by the monks. Some of its produce supplied the monastery, and the rest was sold. The garden was leased by the Abbot and convent to a succession of lessees from 1465 until 1536 when it came into Henry VIII's possession. It is assumed that these activities, consistent with open land and agricultural/market gardening activity, contributed to the accumulation of the soil ('dark earth'), which overlies the remains of the preceding Saxon town.

2.6 Post-medieval

The Dissolution of the Monasteries in 1538–40 resulted in many church lands passing into private ownership. The site during the 16th century was most probably open land to the south of St Giles-in-the-Fields and north of the Strand. The Long Acre boundary is indicated by a hedge and Drury Lane appears to be a prominent thoroughfare (probably in origin a medieval lane linking the Strand and High Holborn). This map is thought to date to before 1572.

In 1552 John Russell, the first earl of Bedford, was granted the former convent garden, most of which continued to be used as pasture until the 1630s, when the Covent Garden Piazza and surrounding streets were laid out between 1630–41 by Francis Russell, the fourth earl of Bedford, as the first planned housing scheme in London. Inigo Jones, Surveyor to Charles I, was responsible for the layout of an Italian style Piazza which subsequently became Covent Garden Market.

Hollar's engraving of 1658 shows this early development of the area. The study site by this time appears to comprise gardens of properties fronting onto what is now Mercer Street although a small house on fronting onto Shelton Street may fall within the western part of the site.

To the west was marshland drained by a large ditch or watercourse, which followed the line of St Martin's Lane and thereafter down to the River Thames. The upper part of it was named the Cock and Pye ditch after the inn, which is thought to have existed on the site of present Wellington House on the corner of Upper St Martin's Lane and Shelton Street. The Cock and Pye ditch was built over in 1671 and Seven Dials was laid out in 1693.

At 18 Tower Street (TOE91) 17th-century rubbish pits were dug into a deep sequence of earlier alluvial deposits of either a man-made or natural channel. The channel fills were recorded as deep as 5.70m below basement floor level. The post-medieval ditch appears to be later management of this pre-existing watercourse, which ran west along the line of modern day Shelton Street before turning south to run beneath modern day St. Martins Lane.

On Rocque's map of 1746 (Fig 3) Shelton Street was previously called Castle Street. On Horwood's map of 1799 (Fig 4) the study area appears to be small tenements with rear yards.

Shelton Street was still referred to as Castle Street in 1914. The present buildings were constructed sometime in the 19th century.

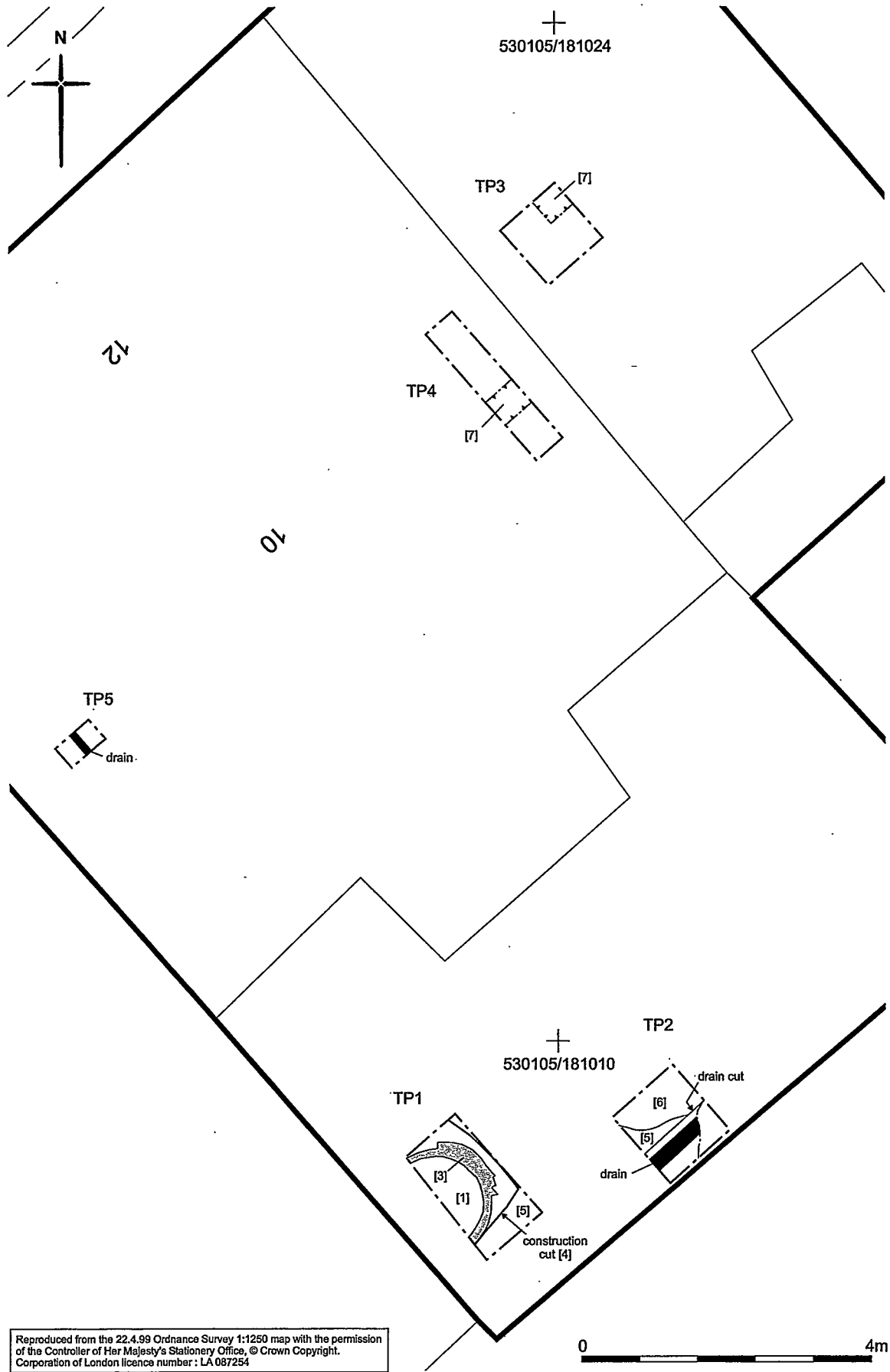


Fig 5 Test pits 1-5

3 The watching brief

3.1 Methodology

All archaeological excavation and recording during the watching brief was done in accordance with the *Method Statement* (Howe 2004) and the MoLAS Archaeological Site Manual (MoLAS 1994).

The slab/ground was broken out and cleared by the contractors. Test pits 1 and 2 were excavated by hand and recorded by a member of staff from MoLAS. Test pits 3–5 were excavated by hand by the contractors and recorded by a member of staff from MoLAS.

The locations of the areas of excavation were recorded by a member of staff from MoLAS offsetting from adjacent standing walls and plotted on to a Basement Survey (Drg. No. 985-01 John Stebbing Architect). This information was then plotted onto the OS grid.

The heights of observations and/or archaeological remains were recorded relative to Ordnance Datum via a traverse to the OS benchmark of 23.70m OD on the north face of the Cambridge Theatre on Earlham Street, London WC2.

Where relevant, plans were drawn at a scale of 1:20 and numbered contexts were allocated where appropriate.

The site has produced: a trench location plan; 7 context records; plans of test pits 1 and 2 at 1:20 and a series of digital photographs. In addition two bricks were sampled for dating from well/soakaway [3].

The site finds and records can be found under the site code SOS04 in the MoL archive.

3.2 Results of the watching brief

In total, five separate interventions (test pits) were made for the purposes of evaluating underlying deposits prior to redevelopment. These have been numbered 1–5 consecutively. A brief description follows of the archaeological deposits as recorded.

For all test pit locations see fig 2

<i>Watching Brief Test Pit 1</i>	
Location	South west corner of yard to rear of property
Dimensions	1.80m N/W by S/E and 1m N/E by S/W
Modern ground level/top of slab	18.63m OD
Base of modern fill/slab	18.38m OD
Depth of archaeological deposits seen	0.45m
Level of base of deposits observed	N/A
Natural observed	18.38m OD

Test pit 1 was located in the south-west corner of the yard within the area of the proposed extension. Natural clayey sandy gravel [5] was recorded at a height of 18.38m OD. This natural gravel, which was orange in colour and compact, was also recorded in trench 2 to the east. The surface of the deposit was level, being truncated during the construction of the lower ground floor yard surface.

The eastern half of a brick-lined well [3] possibly dating to between the 17th and 18th century was recorded in the trench and continuing west beyond the limit of excavation. The well/soakaway was constructed of dark red bricks dating to between 1666–1800. The eastern half of a square cut [4] for this well was recorded truncating the natural at a height of 18.38m OD. This cut, which was not fully excavated, continued west beyond the limit of excavation. The brick well was recorded at a height of 18.38m OD with an external diameter of 1.45m and an internal diameter of 1.20m. Six courses of brickwork were excavated with a height of 0.45m but, due to the height of the water table at this time recorded at a height of 17.93m OD, the structure was not fully excavated.

The fill [2] of the construction cut for the well consisted of dark grey sandy silt with frequent flecks of charcoal. The backfill [1] of the well was excavated to a depth of 0.50m but not bottomed. This fill consisted of brown clayey, sandy silt and brick rubble and is 20th-century in date.

Sealing the backfill of the well and the trench was the present yard surface consisting of a 0.10m thick layer of concrete beneath a 50mm thick bedding layer of sand for 50mm thick concrete slabs recorded at a height of 18.63m OD.

<i>Watching Brief Test Pit 2</i>	
Location	South east edge of yard
Dimensions	1.20m N/W by S/E and 1.10m N/E by S/W
Modern ground level/top of slab	18.63m OD
Base of modern fill/slab	18.43m OD
Depth of archaeological deposits seen	N/A
Level of base of deposits observed	N/A
Natural observed	18.43m OD

Test pit 2 was located along the southern boundary of the yard area and to the east of test pit 1. A 60mm thick layer of brickearth [6] was recorded at a height of 18.43m OD overlying natural clayey sandy gravel [5]. These natural deposits were truncated in the south by an E–W running 20th-century drain associated with the present yard. Above this was a 60mm thick layer of concrete followed by a 50mm thick bedding layer of sand for the 50mm thick concrete slab of the present yard surface recorded with a surface height of 18.63m OD.

Although both natural deposits were truncated from above by the present yard surface, in the north-east half of the trench the underlying natural gravel is sealed by a 60mm thick layer of brickearth. This means that in this area the original surface height of the gravel survives and is recorded at 18.37m OD.

<i>Watching Brief Test Pit 3</i>	
Location	Basement of property 14
Dimensions	1m N/W by S/E and 1m N/E by S/W
Modern ground level/top of slab	18.67m OD
Base of modern fill/slab	17.81m OD
Depth of archaeological deposits seen	N/A
Level of base of deposits observed	N/A
Natural observed	17.81m OD

Test pit 3 was located in the basement of property 14. A grey, sandy, gravel and clay deposit [7] that may be natural was recorded at a height of 17.77m OD. As the deposit was obscured by the apparent water table it was only excavated to a depth of 0.10m.

Overlying this was a 0.40m thick foundation layer of concrete and brick rubble for a now demolished 20th-century internal basement wall that ran NE–SW through the middle of the trench. Also above the rubble foundation layer and to the south-east of the wall was an earlier concrete basement floor recorded with a surface height of 18.17m OD. This floor was sealed by a 0.35m make-up layer of soft grey, silty, sandy clay for the 0.15m thick present concrete basement floor, recorded with a surface height of 18.67m OD.

To the north-west of the now demolished internal wall and above the concrete and brick rubble foundation layer was a 0.10m thick layer of clayey, sandy silt followed by a two course thick 20th-century possible brick floor or foundation recorded at a height of 18.47m OD. Overlying this was the present concrete basement floor.

<i>Watching Brief Test Pit 4</i>	
Location	Along S/W basement wall of property 14
Dimensions	2.30m N/W by S/E and 0.48m N/E by S/W
Modern ground level/top of slab	18.67m OD
Base of modern fill/slab	17.82m OD
Depth of archaeological deposits seen	N/A
Level of base of deposits observed	N/A
Natural observed	17.82m OD

Test pit 4 was located directly above a demolished section of the SW basement wall of property 14. This test pit was excavated by the developer in order to determine the depth of foundations of this wall. Natural sandy gravel [7] was observed at a height of 17.82m OD at the same level as what appears to be the present water table. Above this was a 0.35m thick concrete foundation for the 20th-century basement wall, recorded at a height of 18.17m OD.

<i>Watching Brief Test Pit 5</i>	
Location	Basement of properties 10 and 12
Dimensions	0.60m N/E by S/W and 0.35m N/W by S/E
Modern ground level/top of slab	18.67m OD
Base of modern fill/slab	18.22m OD
Depth of archaeological deposits seen	N/A
Level of base of deposits observed	N/A
Natural observed	N/A

Test pit 5 was located directly above a demolished NE–SW running internal basement wall in the western half of the site. The test pit was excavated to a depth of 0.45m below the slab but the base of the wall was not bottomed. A disused, NW–SE running ceramic service pipe was recorded truncating the wall at a depth of 0.30m below the slab. The wall was constructed of light yellow bricks and cement.

The internal walls of the basement appear to be later additions to the building. They are all constructed of cement and light yellow bricks that have narrow sharp frogs with rounded ends that probably date to the 20th century. These walls sit on concrete foundations and are keyed into the north-east and south-west basement property walls. Where exposed during the current development, the south-west property wall is shown to be constructed of unfrogged red and plum coloured bricks with a light grey, sandy lime mortar. This wall may be part of the original build of the property, with all internal walls being later additions or it could belong to an earlier structure that has

been incorporated into the current property. The north-west and south-east exterior walls appear to be constructed of yellow stock bricks with the north-east wall being unclear as, apart from an added fireplace, all brickwork was covered with a plaster render.

4 Potential of archaeology

4.1 Original research aims

- *What was the level of natural topography?*

The results of the watching brief has shown that natural clay, sand and gravel deposits [5] have been truncated by the present basement and yard area at heights of between 18.43m OD and 18.38m OD. In test pit 2 the natural gravel was sealed by a 6cm thick layer of brickearth [6], recorded at a height of 18.43m OD. This means that in this area the original surface height of the gravel survives and is recorded at 18.37m OD. This data will contribute to the mapping of the natural topography of the area.

- *Is there evidence of the Cock and Pye ditch or related features associated with the marshy area along Shelton Street?*

There was no evidence of marsh like deposits or evidence of the Cock and Pye ditch and related features on the site.

- *Is there evidence for Early Saxon activity on the site?*

There was no evidence for Early Saxon activity on the site.

- *Is there evidence for Middle Saxon activity on the site?*

There was no evidence for Middle Saxon activity on the site.

- *The site appears to remain undeveloped into the later post-medieval period. What evidence is there for the development of the site?*

The presence of a brick well/soakaway is the only evidence for occupation earlier than the present building that survives in the areas of excavation. The well/soakaway was constructed of bricks dating from between 1666–1800 and may relate to tenements fronting onto Shelton Street, previously called Castle Street that can be seen on Horwood's map of 1799 (Fig 4).

4.2 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.

The presence of a brick well/soakaway recorded in test pit 1 during the limited excavation of the area shows that although the majority of the horizontal archaeological deposits appear to have been truncated by the properties basement and yard area, there is still evidence for the survival of deeper cut features across the site.

5 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 in accordance with the terms of the *Method Statement* (Howe 2004) with the Museum of London within 12 months of the end of the excavation.

In view of the limited potential of the material (Sections 4) and the relatively limited significance of the data (Section 4.2) 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*.

6 Conclusions

The results of the watching brief have shown that there is some survival of deep cut features from the post-medieval period. The base of truncation is lower than the level of the original natural ground surface and no horizontal stratigraphy appears to survive below the existing basement floor and yard area to the rear of the property.

The presence of a post-medieval well/soakaway in the area of the yard is evidence for the survival of cut features associated with 17th–18th-century occupation of the site.

7 Acknowledgements

The author would like to thank the following for their contributions and help in producing this report: Artinville Limited for commissioning the report; John Stebbing Architect for providing information on the project and Kevin Moore and staff at Artinville Limited for their on site assistance.

The author would also like to thank all the MoLAS and MoLSS staff who assisted on the project.

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9 NMR OASIS archaeological report form

9.1 OASIS ID: molas1-4317

Project details

Project name 10-14 Shelton Street

Short description of the project

As part of a development at 10-14 Shelton Street, London WC2, which includes the construction of an extension at basement and ground floor levels to the rear of the property, five test pits were excavated and recorded between 10/8/2004 and 20/8/2004. A post-medieval brick well/soakaway was recorded in test pit 1 in the yard area to the rear of the property. Natural brickearth [6] was observed in test pit 2, overlying natural clayey, sand and gravel [5] and recorded at 18.43m OD. Natural clayey, sand and gravel deposits [5] was observed in trenches 1-2 and recorded at heights of 18.37m OD. The highest survival of archaeological deposits occurred at 18.38m OD.

Project dates Start: 10-08-2004 End: 20-08-2004

Previous/future work No / No

Any associated project reference codes SOS04 - Sitecode

Type of project Recording project

Site status Area of Archaeological Importance (AAI)

Current Land use Residential 1 - General Residential

Monument type WELL/SOAKAWAY Post Medieval

Investigation type 'Watching Brief'

Prompt Direction from Local Planning Authority - PPG16

Project location

Country England

Site location GREATER LONDON CITY OF WESTMINSTER CITY OF WESTMINSTER 10-14 Shelton Street

Postcode WC2

Study area 180 Square metres

National reference grid TQ 30104 81019 Point

Height OD Min: 18.38m Max: 18.43m

Project creators

Name of Organisation MoLAS

Project originator brief English Heritage/Department of Environment

Project originator design MoLAS

Project director/manager Elizabeth Howe

Project supervisor Paul Thrale

Sponsor or funding body Artinville Limited

Project archives

Physical Archive recipient LAARC

Physical Archive ID SOS04

Physical Archive Exists? Yes

Digital Archive recipient LAARC

Digital Archive ID SOS04

Digital Contents 'Survey', 'other'

Digital available	Media	'Text'
Digital notes	Archive	digital photographs
Digital Exists?	Archive	Yes
Paper recipient	Archive	LAARC
Paper Archive ID		SOS04
Paper available	Media	'Context sheet','Drawing','Plan','Report','Unpublished Text'
Paper Exists?	Archive	Yes

Project bibliography 1

Publication type	An unpublished document/manuscript
Title	10-14 Shelton Street
Author(s)/Editor(s)	Thrale, P.
Date	2004

Description An archaeological watching brief report

Entered by	Paul Thrale (molas.archive@museumoflondon.org.uk)
Entered on	19 October 2004