

**DEVONSHIRE PLACE
9-11 Cutlers Gardens
London EC2**

City of London

Watching brief report

January 2009



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Watching brief report

Site Code: DQC08

National Grid Reference: 533405 181546

Project Manager	Sophie Jackson
Author	Antonieta Lerz
Graphics	Judit Peresztegi

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Mortimer Wheeler House, 46 Eagle Wharf Road, London N1 7ED
tel 020 7410 2200 fax 020 7410 2201
molas@museumoflondon.org.uk
www.museumoflondonarchaeology.org.uk

Summary (non-technical)

This report has been commissioned by Fletcher Priest Architects in order to record and assess the results of a watching brief carried out in the west courtyard of Nos 9, 9a, 10 and 11 Cutlers Gardens, Devonshire Place.

The groundworks were monitored between January and July 2008 during the redevelopment of the site.

Archaeological deposits and structural features were recorded in four of the six trenches. The northern courtyard was characterised by extensive agricultural soil horizons which contained occasional pottery dating from the 17th century. A pit recorded in section contained occasional horn cores and 17/18th-century clay tobacco pipes. Two brick culverts, orientated east-west and north-south were recorded in the eastern part of the courtyard. These were probably associated with the East India Company warehouses which were built on the site at the end of the 18th century.

Two of the three trenches excavated in the southern courtyard exposed modern intrusions. In the south part of the courtyard, 18th-century soil horizons were recorded at the base of the trench. A brick vaulted undercroft structure and part of a brick wall exposed in section might also be associated with the former 18th-century warehouses. Natural deposits were not observed.

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1 Introduction

1.1 Site background

The watching brief took place in the central courtyards of Nos. 9–11 Cutlers Gardens, hereafter called ‘the site’ (figs 1 and 2).

The two rectangular courtyards are located opposite each other, separated by a passage continuation from New Street. The northern courtyard is enclosed by the buildings at No. 9 Cutlers Gardens and the southern courtyard is enclosed by those at Nos. 10 and 11. The centre of the site is at OS National Grid Reference 533401 181431.

The level of the brick cobbled ground surface varied between 15.50m OD and 15.62m OD. The site code is DQC08.

A desk top *Method Statement* was previously prepared by MoLAS, which covers the whole area of the site (Jackson, 2007). This document should be referred to for the initial assessment of the site’s archaeological potential.

The site contains the Grade II Listed Port of London Authority warehouses and boundary walls to Middlesex Street and New Street, Listing NGR: TQ3340581546.

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 Section 1.3, Jackson, 2007)

1.3 Planning background

xx add what stage in the planning process the site has reached and the relationship of the archaeological exercise to that stage: ie was it done as a condition. Consult Project Manager.

1.4 Origin and scope of the report

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

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* (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):

- What is the level of the natural topography?
- What the earliest deposits identified?
- What are the latest deposits identified?
- Is there any further evidence of Roman inhumations associated with the nearby Roman cemetery on Bishopsgate?
- Is there further evidence of the 17th-century cellars and foundations discovered during the previous archaeological works?

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

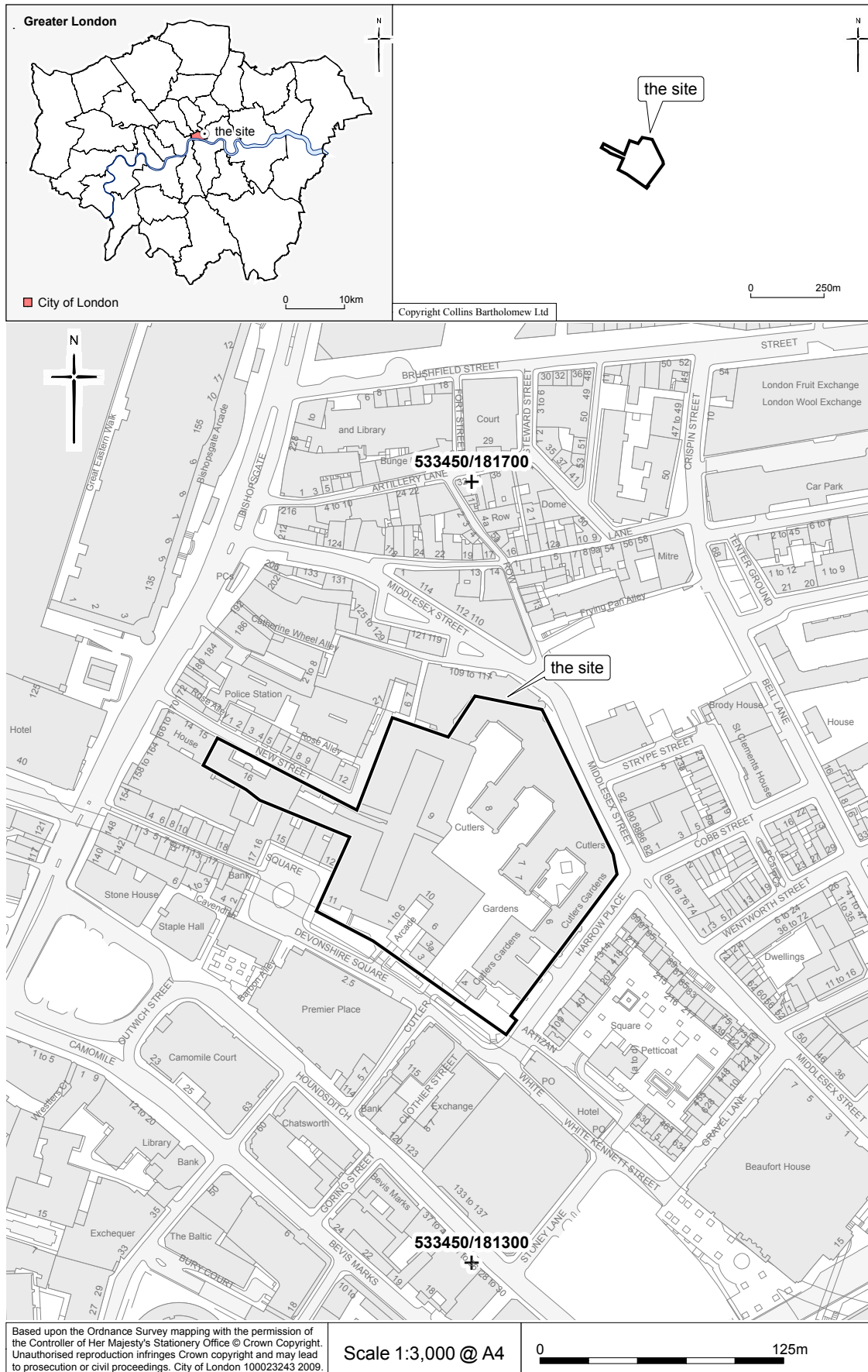


Fig 1 Site location plan

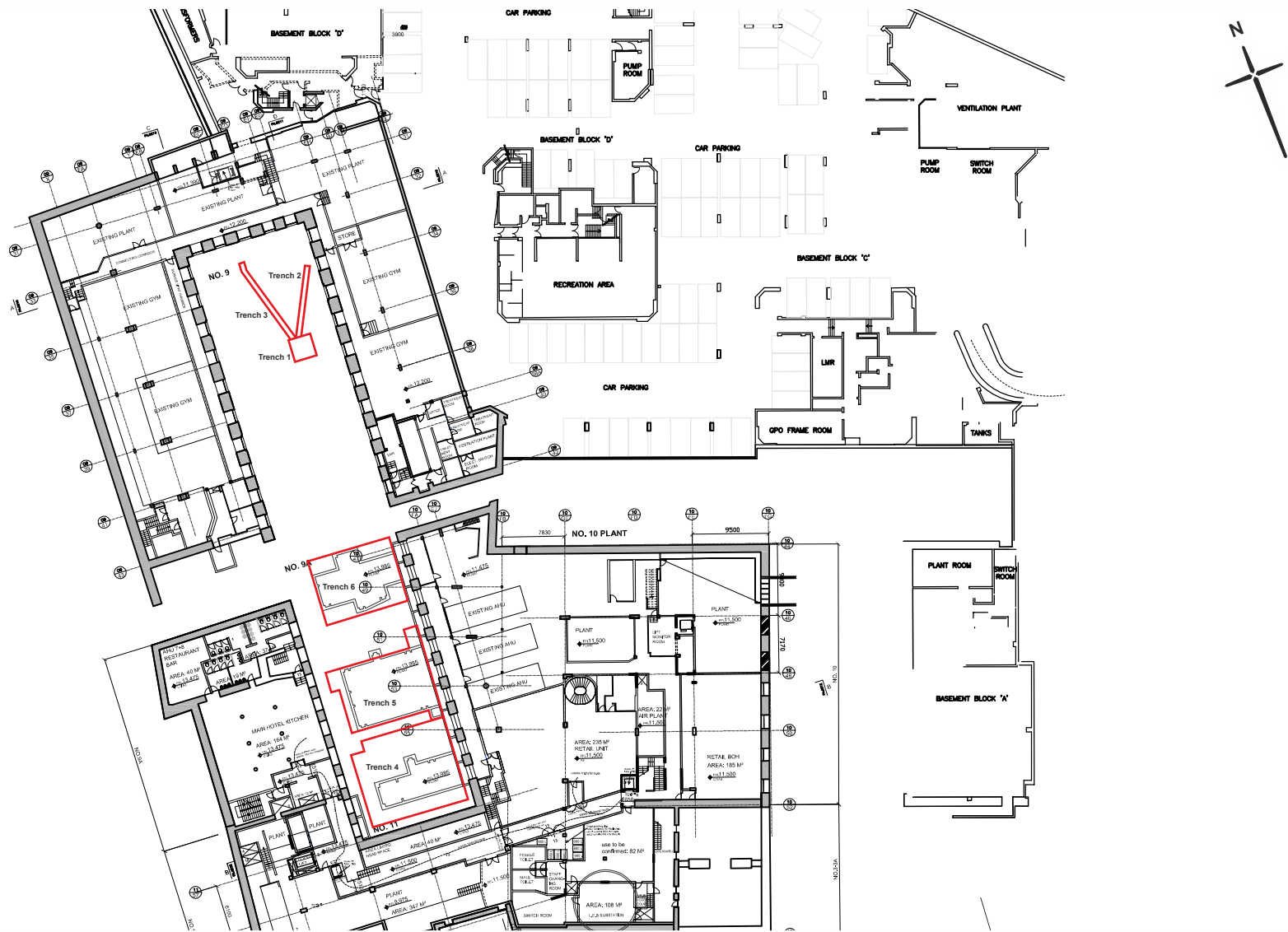


Fig 2 Trench locations

2 Topographical and historical background

2.1 Geology and topography

The site is situated on a gravel terrace of the River Thames, laid down towards the end of the last Ice Age in the Devensian stage, around 297,000 to 10,000 years ago. In this area the terraces are overlain by sandy silts more commonly known as ‘brickearth’ which formed in the late Devensian stage (32,000-10,000 BP). Its surface is generally found at a level of between 10.50–12.50m OD though, in practice, much of it has been quarried away in Roman, medieval and more recent periods as an important source of building material in London.

Records from the 1979–1980 excavations show that brickearth was present in all areas of the site recorded at an average level of 10.51m OD.

2.2 Prehistoric

Until recently, there was little evidence for prehistoric activity in the City of London. Artefacts of Paleolithic age have been recovered from the London region, having been redeposited by glacial action and found within the Thames terrace gravels as isolated or ‘stray’ finds. In the vicinity of the site, these include a Palaeolithic flint artefact recovered from excavations at St Mary Axe and a Neolithic arrowhead from No.38 Bishopsgate. Late Bronze Age- Early Iron Age surfaces and pits were recorded at 41–63 Bishopsgate. These were sealed with redeposited brickearth which contained struck flints and pottery of similar date, which in turn were sealed by Roman deposits.

2.3 Roman

The site lies some 170m north of the Roman city wall which was built in *c* AD 200 and *c* 150m to the east of Ermine Street. This was one of the most important thoroughfares in Britain, connecting London to the military centres at Lincoln and York.

Roman law forbade the burying of the dead within the city boundaries, and so the cemeteries of *Londinium* were concentrated along roads leading out of the city. The site lies within the northern cemetery, which is known to have extended from immediately outside the wall as far as 201 Bishopsgate. The 1979 excavations carried out at Cutlers Gardens (CUT78) revealed three graves dating from the 4th century in the southwest corner of the site. Burials have also been recorded at 20–26 Cutler Street (CCT90), 58–60 Houndsditch (HSD89) and 9–12 Cutler Street (CUT96). Over 60 burials and 5 cremations were recorded during excavations at Spitalfields Market (SRP98), with the earliest dating from the 2nd century AD while at Premier Place, 2 1/2 Devonshire Square, to the south of the site, 36 Roman inhumations have been recorded (CDV99).

2.4 Medieval

There is little archaeological evidence for Saxon or early medieval activity in the vicinity of the site as the main focus of settlement appears to have been around the trading port further to the west known as *Lundenwic*.

During the succeeding twelve hundred years, the site appears largely to have been given over to agriculture. The documentary evidence indicates that the site lay in an area which from the 13th century was part of the gardens of Holy Trinity Priory in Aldgate. The priory buildings passed into the hands of Lord Audley following the Dissolution.

By the mid 16th century, the area on the north side of Houndsditch had undergone some development. Some of these properties had come into the possession of the Cutlers' livery company in the 15th century and were used as houses, gardens, yards and workshops by numerous tradespeople including a fishmonger, a joiner, a saddler and tallow chandlers (Hunting 1984, 13-16).

2.5 Post-medieval

From the 16th century, the development of the area can be charted through the cartographic record. The contrast between the congested city within the walls and the rural conditions immediately outside was illustrated in the copperplate map of *c* 1559 (not reproduced). The map places the site to the rear of houses fronting onto Houndsditch, in gardens or fields.

A century later, the 1658 Faithorne and Newcourt map showed the area of the site still in open land, crossing a field boundary which is evidenced in the present day by the dividing passage between the two courtyards (see cover).

It seems that this part of the site remained open ground until the mid 17th century when rapid growth and development transformed the area.

During the 1979–1980 excavation and watching brief, remains of 17th-century cellars were recorded as well as debris from several small-scale industries including clay pipemaking, bell-founding, glassmaking and hornworking. Over a dozen pits lined with cattle horn cores were found during the course of the watching brief.

The area of the site did not change significantly until these were demolished at the end of the 18th century to make way for the East India Company warehouses. Horwood's map of 1799 is the earliest to show these buildings (fig 3) and it was not until 1833 when the company lost its monopoly of trade in china tea that it sold most of its warehouses. In 1836, the St Katherine's Docks Company brought the freehold and the buildings were converted into offices in the early 1980s.

3 The watching brief

3.1 Methodology

All archaeological excavation and recording during the watching brief was done in accordance with the *Method Statement* (Jackson, 2007) and the MoLAS Archaeological Site Manual (MoLAS, 1994).

The brick cobbles and concrete slabs were broken out and cleared by contractors. The trenches were excavated by machine by the contractors down to formation level and monitored by a senior member of staff from MoLAS.

The locations of the areas of excavation were recorded by offsetting from adjacent standing walls and plotted on to the *Proposed Basement Plan (Drg. No. 02B1, Fletcher-Priest Architects Ltd)*.

The heights of observations and archaeological remains were recorded relative to Ordnance Data plotted onto the architectural plans.

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

The site has produced: 5 trench location plans; 22 context records and 5 section drawings at 1:20.

The site records can be found under the site code DQC08 in the MoL archive.

3.2 Results of the watching brief

In total, six separate interventions (trenches) were excavated by the contractors and monitored by MoLAS. These have been numbered 1–6 consecutively. There follows a brief description of the archaeological deposits as recorded.

For trench locations see fig 2

<i>Watching Brief Trench 1</i>	
Location	East part of north courtyard
Dimensions	3.00m by 3.00m by 2.20m depth
Modern ground level/top of slab	15.56m OD
Base of modern fill/slab	15.16m OD
Depth of archaeological deposits seen	1.8m
Level of base of deposits observed	13.36m OD
Natural observed	N/A

Trench 1 was excavated in order to access the modern services and was excavated by machine to 2.20m below ground level. The central and western parts of the trench were truncated by the modern services, though undisturbed archaeological deposits and features were observed and recorded in the sections.

The earliest deposit recorded was a layer of grey clay [7] which contained occasional charcoal and chalk flecks. It extended across the base of the trench, sloping down from north to south from 13.81m OD and 13.71m OD. In the southern half of the trench it was overlaid by a 1.40m thick soil horizon of brownish-grey clayey silt [6]. This contained occasional brick fragments and oyster shell and extended up to the base of the concrete ground slab at 15.16m OD. In the southeast corner of the trench, it was truncated by a large pit [5], which was recorded in the eastern and southern sections. It was filled with similar material to deposit [6], but contained a greater quantity of inclusions, including several horn-cores, occasional pottery sherds dating from the 17th and 18th centuries and occasional daub fragments [4]. It measured 1.40m in depth and extended 1.20m across the eastern section of the trench where it was truncated by the modern service trench.

In the northern part of the trench, the clay deposit [7] was truncated by the construction cut [3] for an east-west running 19th-century brick drain [2] which is likely to be associated with the East India Company Warehouses which were built on the site in the late 18th century. The upper seven courses of the convex southern face of the drain were exposed. It was built with stepped, red and occasional yellow bricks bonded with firm, light grey, lime mortar. It measured 0.72m in height and the top of the drain was recorded at 14.00m OD. It extended 2m across the northern section of the trench but was truncated at the western end by modern footings (fig 4).

The southern edge of the construction cut [3] for the drain was truncated by the modern service trench in Trench 1, but the north edge was observed in Trench 2. Here, it was shown to extend 0.35m north of Trench 1 and was 1.25m high, though it continued below the formation level of the trench. The top of the cut was recorded at 14.61m OD, immediately beneath the modern pipes which truncated it.

The upper 1.15m of the construction cut had been backfilled with very mixed, gravelly silts containing brick rubble [1].

<i>Watching Brief Trench 2</i>	
Location	Northeast part of north courtyard
Dimensions	9.10m by 0.50m by 2.20m depth
Modern ground level/top of slab	15.56m OD
Base of modern service trenches	14.66m OD to 13.56m OD
Depth of archaeological deposits seen	1.3m
Level of base of deposits observed	13.36m OD
Natural observed	Not observed

Trench 2 was a linear drainage trench leading off northwest from trench 1 (fig 7). The earliest deposit recorded was a deposit of dark brown silty clay [11] which contained occasional bone, oyster shell and roof tile. It was exposed at the northern end of the trench and measured 3.10m in length by 0.84m high, though it continued below formation level and extended across the width of the trench. It was truncated to the south by a large trench [10] which extended 7.20m along the exposed sections. This was backfilled with dark brown clayey silt [9] which contained chalk fragments and a mixed deposit of gravelly silt [8] which contained red brick demolition rubble. These extended up to the level of the modern ground surface.

The southern edge of the trench was truncated by the construction cut [3] of the east-west running brick drain [2] exposed in Trench 1. It extended 0.40m into the trench, exposing the drain in profile and was backfilled with the same deposit [1] described above. Natural deposits were not located.

<i>Watching Brief Trench 3</i>	
Location	Northeast part of north courtyard
Dimensions	9.10m by 0.50m by 1.20m 1.80m dept
Modern ground level/top of slab	15.56m OD
Depth of slab	0.40m
Depth of archaeological deposits seen	1.40m
Level of base of deposits observed	13.76m OD – 14.36m OD
Natural observed	Not observed

Trench 3 was a linear, shallow trench which lead off from the northern edge of Trench 1, to the east of Trench 2. The earliest deposit identified was a dark, greyish-brown silty soil horizon [16] which contained occasional contained pottery dating from the 17th century. Heavily truncated on all sides, the exposed section measured 1.35m in length by 1.00m deep. It was exposed near the southern edge of the trench where it was truncated to the north by the construction cut [13] of a north-south orientated brick drain, the top of which could just be seen at the base of the trench at 13.76m OD. A mixed deposit of brownish-grey sandy silt [12] which contained construction debris had been backfilled over the drain. This could be traced along the section up to the northern terminus of the trench where it had been truncated by modern service trenches.

The large cut in Trench 2 described above might be part of the same construction trench, as they were of similar dimensions, in close proximity to each other and backfilled with similar material.

<i>Watching Brief Trench 4</i>	
Location	South part of south courtyard
Dimensions	11m by 11m by 2.00m depth
Modern ground level/top of slab	15.56m OD
Depth of slab	0.20m
Depth of archaeological deposits seen	1.20m
Level of base of deposits observed	13.56 m OD

Natural observed	Not observed
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Trench 4 was located in the southern part of the south courtyard. It measured 11.m sq. and was excavated down to 2.00m below ground level. Natural deposits were not observed.

The earliest deposits observed were two layers of dark brown sandy silt, [20] and [21] located in the eastern part of the trench. Both contained occasional oyster shells, animal bones, pottery and clay tobacco pipes. Layer [20] was c 150mm thick and contained part of a 17th-18th century Bellamine jug. The surface of layer [21] was exposed at the base of the trench as 13.56m OD.

In the northern part of the trench these were truncated by a linear, red brick vaulted undercroft structure [18] which had been backfilled with brick demolition rubble [17]. It continued beyond the northern limit of the trench and the exposed length measured 1.40m east-west by 2.50m north-south by 1.10m in height.

In the northwest corner of the trench a short stretch of wall [22] was revealed in section. It ran 1.40m west to east, jutting out from the western trench edge and measured 1.00m wide and 1.50m high. It was built from similar bricks and mortar to [18] and is therefore likely to have been contemporary. However, the area surrounding the wall had been truncated by modern groundworks so the relationship between the two could not be established. It seems likely that both these structures are to be associated with the 18th/19th century warehouses, perhaps serving as underground storage chambers.

<i>Watching Brief Trench 5</i>	
Location	Central part of southern courtyard
Dimensions	11m by 11m by 2.0m depth
Modern ground level/top of slab	15.5m OD
Thickness of slab	400mm
Level of base of trench	13.5m OD
Natural observed	Not observed

Trench 5 was located in the central part of the south courtyard, 3m north of Trench 4. No archaeological remains were exposed. The eastern end of a concrete crane base employed during the construction of the Cutlers' Gardens offices in the late 1970s was uncovered in the western third of the trench. The remainder of the trench was filled with modern pipes and ballast.

<i>Watching Brief Trench 6</i>	
Location	North part of south courtyard
Dimensions	11m by 11m by 2.0m depth
Modern ground level/top of slab	15.5m OD
Level of base of trench	13.5m OD
Natural observed	Not observed

Trench 6 was excavated to the north of Trench 5, in the north part of the south courtyard. The sections revealed that the area had been completely truncated by modern intrusions and had been backfilled with rubble. Natural deposits were not observed

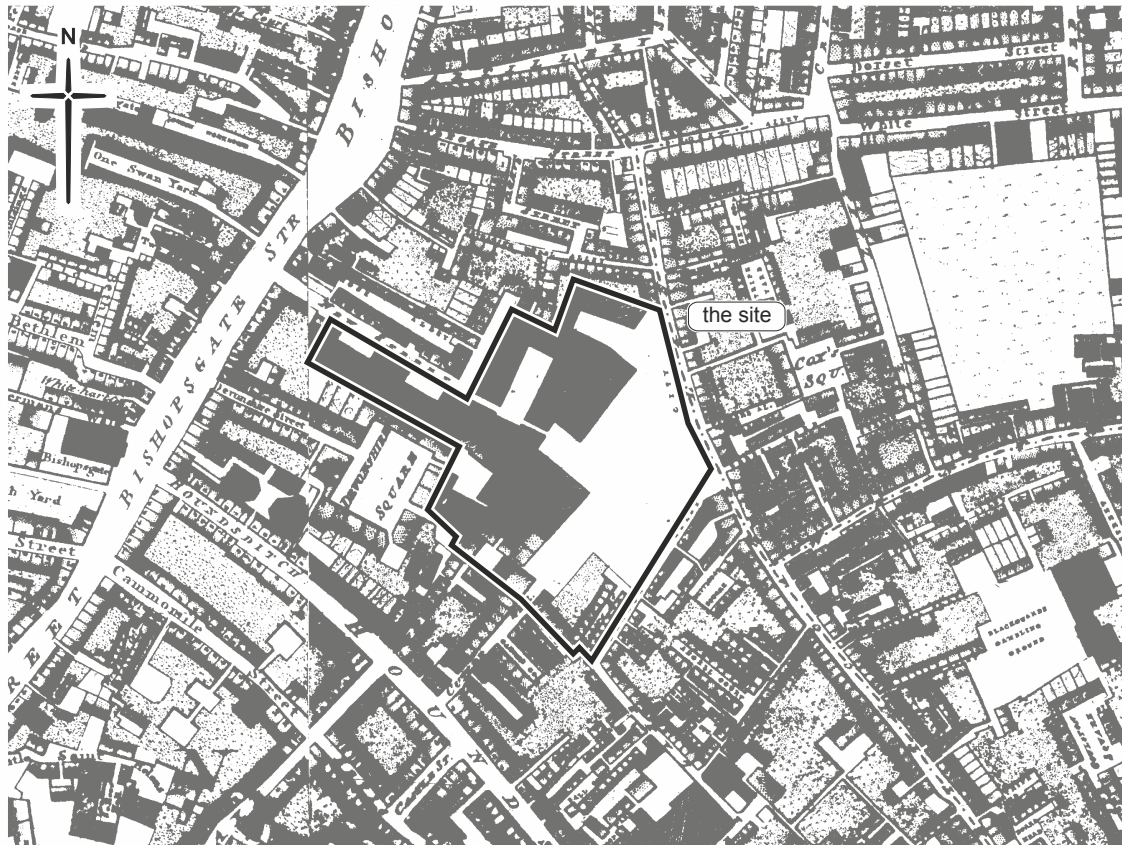


Fig 3 The site on Horwood's map of 1799

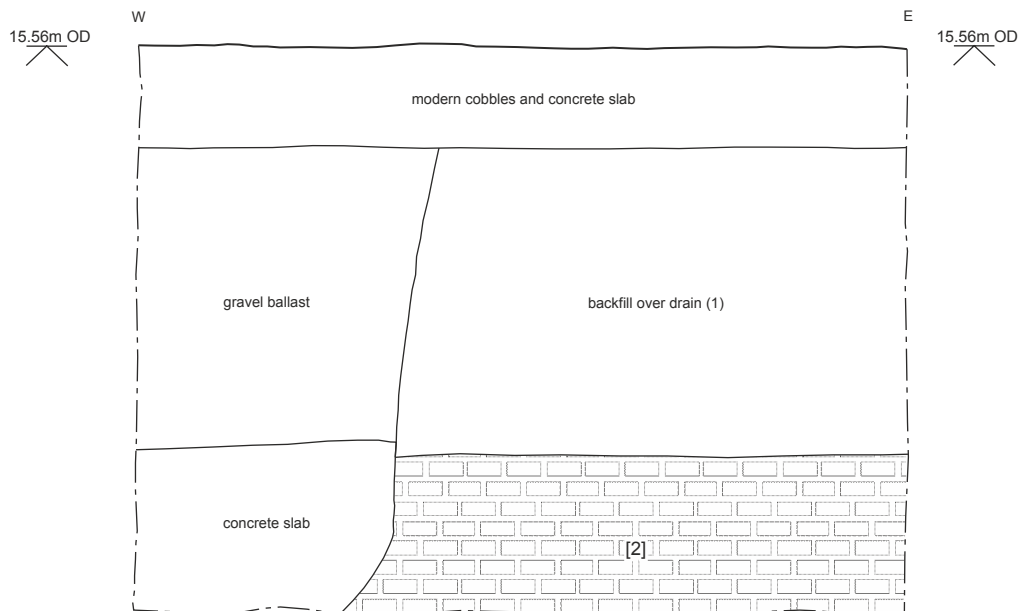


Fig 4 Section showing the truncated brick drain

4 Potential of archaeology

4.1 Original research aims

The research aims set out in the watching brief Method Statement (Jackson, 2007 section 2.2) mostly related to the results from the 1978 excavations carried out in on the site. The trenches monitored during the current watching brief were relatively shallow and only penetrated the post-medieval deposits. Therefore, many of the research aims raised in the Method Statement remain unanswered.

What was the level of the natural topography?

The trenches were not excavated deep enough to reach the natural brickearth or gravels. The predicted level of the untruncated 'natural' brickearth in this area is between 11.50m–12.0m OD. The trenches were excavated to a maximum depth of 13.56m OD.

What are the earliest deposits identified?

Extensive layers of agricultural soil horizons containing 17th and 18th-century pottery fragments were recorded across the site. This corroborates the cartographic record which locates the site in fields and, later, back gardens during this period

What are the latest deposits identified?

In the northern courtyard, two arched brick drains orientated east-west and north-south truncated the earlier deposits. It is likely that these are associated with the East India Company warehouses which were stood on the site from the end of the 18th century until their partial destruction in the 1970s.

In the southern courtyard part of a brick vaulted undercroft structure and a brick wall exposed in section might also be associated with the former warehouses.

Is there any further evidence of Roman inhumations associated with the nearby cemetery on Bishopsgate?

There was no evidence of Roman inhumations on the site. However, the trenches were not excavated deep enough to reach the Roman levels recorded during the 1978 excavations.

Is there any further evidence of the 17th-century cellars and foundations discovered during the previous archaeological works?

There was no evidence of any 17th-century structures on the site. However, the watching-brief trenches were excavated to an average depth of *c*13.30m OD which is significantly higher than the 12.00m OD level at which these structures were recorded during the 1978 excavations.

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.

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* (Jackson, 2007) with the Museum of London within 12 months of the end of the excavation.

In view of the limited potential of the material (sections 3 and 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 Acknowledgements

The author would like to thank Fletcher Priest Architects for commissioning this report.

7 Bibliography

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8 NMR OASIS archaeological report form

8.1 OASIS ID: molas1-53339

Project details

Project name Devonshire Place. 9-11 Cutlers Gardens

Short description of the project Groundworks in the west courtyard of Nos 9, 9a, 10 and 11 Cutlers Gardens were monitored. Archaeological deposits and structural features were recorded in four of the six trenches. The northern courtyard was characterised by extensive agricultural soil horizons which contained occasional pottery dating from the 17th century. A pit recorded in section contained occasional horn cores and 17/18th-century clay tobacco pipes. Two brick culverts, orientated east-west and north-south were recorded in the eastern part of the courtyard. These were probably associated with the East India Company warehouses which were built on the site at the end of the 18th century. Two of the three trenches excavated in the southern courtyard exposed modern intrusions. In the south part of the courtyard, 18th-century soil horizons were recorded at the base of the trench. A brick vaulted undercroft structure and part of a brick wall exposed in section might also be associated with the former 18th-century warehouses. Natural deposits were not observed.

Project dates Start: 11-01-2008 End: 10-07-2008

Previous/future work Yes / Not known

Any associated project reference codes CUT78 - Sitecode

Any associated project reference codes DQC08 - Sitecode

Type of project Recording project

Current Land use Industry and Commerce 2 - Offices

Monument type UNDERCROFT Post Medieval

Monument type WALL Post Medieval

Significant Finds POT Post Medieval

Investigation type 'Watching Brief'

Prompt SMR enhancement

Project location

Country England

Site location GREATER LONDON CITY OF LONDON CITY OF LONDON
Devonshire Place. 9- 11 Cutlers Gardens

Postcode EC2

Study area 0.02 Kilometres

Site coordinates TQ 33402 81400 51.5152532366 -0.07722507165490 51 30 54 N
000 04 38 W Point

Project creators

Name of MoL Archaeology
Organisation

Project brief Fletcher-Priest Architects Ltd
originator

Project design MOL Archaeology
originator

Project director/manager Sophie Jackson

Project supervisor Antonietta Lerz

Type of Architect
sponsor/funding
body

Name of Fletcher-Priest Architects Ltd
sponsor/funding
body

Project archives

Physical Archive No
Exists?

Digital Archive No
Exists?

Paper Archive LAARC
recipient

Project bibliography 1

Publication type Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)

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