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Faraday Buildings,  
Knightrider Street,  
London EC4

NGR TQ 3195 8100

Archaeological Evaluation Report

OXFORD ARCHAEOLOGICAL UNIT

December 1995

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## **1 Summary**

The excavation of three trenches within the Faraday Buildings revealed a partially surviving Roman structure below the east end of Knightrider Street. Deposits interpreted as most likely to be the infilling of first-century Roman gravel quarrying were seen in a trench situated in the north block basement of the building. The third trench, also situated in the north block basement, showed truncation of the natural gravels by the existing structure and recovered some ornamental 19th-century building stone.

The survival of archaeological deposits is very limited, and it is not recommended that they be preserved in situ. Archaeology which will be impacted upon by the development should be the subject of controlled archaeological excavation prior to re-development.

## **2 Introduction**

The Oxford Archaeological Unit undertook an archaeological evaluation on behalf of British Telecom within Faraday Buildings during December 1995. The evaluation was requested by the Corporation of London to aid determination of a Planning Application by British Telecom (Ref: 25/11/94, 0280AA). The work was carried out according to the guidelines of a Written Scheme of Investigation (based on the potential impact of the proposed development) prepared by Oxford Archaeological Unit and agreed by the Corporation of London Planning Authority. The original WSI identified 11 potential trench positions, and, following discussions, a scheme using three of these trenches was agreed (see 5.2 Methodology).

The evaluation followed a desktop report (OAU 1994) which predicted that although no archaeological sites or finds are known from this site, archaeological deposits or remains could survive. These included the possible continuation of the Roman Knightrider Street Walls, buildings associated with them and with the Western Stream, the Anglo-Saxon line of Knightrider Street and properties adjacent to it, and finally two high-status medieval building complexes (see Section 4, Archaeological and historical background)

## **3 Topography and geology**

The Faraday Buildings site covers an area of approximately 7,650 square metres. It is situated approximately 200 m to the north of the present line of the River Thames, on brickearth capped sands and gravels. The site is

bounded on the north by Carter Lane, the south by Queen Victoria Street, the west by Addle Hill and the east by Godliman Street (Fig. 1). A distinct slope is apparent, from the north edge of the site down towards the river; current ground levels are from 14.5 m OD at the north to 9 m OD at the south. Knightrider Street, which bisects the site, forms the boundary between the parishes of St Gregory, to the north, and St Bennet Pauls Wharf, to the south. The site lies in Castle Baynard Ward, within the Roman and medieval city, approximately 150 m east of the western city wall and a similar distance south-east of its main gate, Ludgate.

#### **4 Archaeological and historical background**

The archaeological and historical background was covered in the desktop report (OAU 1994), and a summary is provided within this study (Appendix 4). Only a very brief statement of background is therefore given here, and reference can also be made to Figure 6, which locates known sites in the area.

- \* Prehistoric - Isolated finds only.
- \* Early Roman - Suburban area. Timber buildings (St. Pauls Churchyard), pottery production, cemetery (below St. Pauls cathedral), Western stream.
- \* Roman - Within second century walls. Several stretches of the 'Knightrider Street walls' recorded on the line of this street, east of the site. Possibly representing a precinct wall bounding a building complex to the south.
- \* Anglo-Saxon - Early to mid-Saxon pottery found south of St. Pauls Cathedral. Late Saxon pits and mortar mixers in Knightrider Street. Re-cutting of Western Stream. Knightrider Street first documented AD 888-9.
- \* Medieval - Abbot of Peterborough's Inn (north of Knightrider Street) on the site by 1210 or before. Later converted to the Bell Inn. Mountjoys Inn (south of Knightrider Street) by 1459 or before.
- \* Post-medieval - Mountjoys Inn and surrounding properties converted to Doctors Commons (1568 and after). College of Physicians (chartered 1518) west of Mountjoys Inn. Demolition of historic buildings in the late 19th-century. Replacement structures short-lived, as present building is constructed c. 1930 to 1949.

## 5 Aims and methodology

### 5.1 Aims

The general aims of the evaluation were to establish the presence/absence of significant archaeological deposits which could be affected by the proposed development and to recover information about their date, character and extent.

The specific aims were:

To establish the nature and level of the undisturbed top of natural gravel, and any overlying geological deposit, in significant parts of the site;

To establish the extent to which the natural topography has been affected by any stream running parallel to the Western Stream within the site;

To establish the extent to which Roman and later terracing has affected deposits in significant parts of the site;

To investigate the possibility that remains of the Knightrider Street Walls exist on the site as projected from sightings to the east;

To establish the eco-factual and paleo-environmental potential of archaeological deposits which may be affected by development.

### 5.2 Methodology

The siting of the three trenches took into consideration the potential for disturbance of archaeological deposits by the proposed development, together with current British Telecom operational usage, and health and safety hazards to contractor or British Telecom staff.

#### Trench 1 (Figs 2, 3, 4, 6)

A 2 x 4.8 x 3.4 m (maximum depth) trench. Situated to the east end of Knightrider Street within the Faraday Buildings complex. This trench was excavated by machine, to an appropriate level to reveal an east-west aligned Victorian sewer cut (known to run along the northern side of Knightrider Street). The infilling of the Victorian cut was then excavated, exposing a section which enabled the recording of surviving archaeological deposits (in section) whilst leaving them in situ. The section across the archaeological deposits was cleaned back (by up to 0.1 m) to make reading of the section easier and in an attempt to increase the size of the finds sample.

Trench 4 (Figs 2, 5, 6)

A 1.5 x 2.5 x 1 m (maximum depth) trench. Situated at the south end of the battery room in the north-block basement. This trench was excavated by hand.

Trench 5 (Figs 2, 5, 6)

A 1 x 1 x 1.4 m (depth) trench. Situated in cable walk beside the power room in the north-block basement. This trench was excavated by hand.

## 6 Results

The following is a detailed description of the archaeology, which is summarised and interpreted in Section 7.

### 6.1 Trench 1 .

Natural gravel (131) was revealed in this trench at 10.18 m OD (3.4 m below the current street level). This was capped by 1.4 m of natural brickearth clay (130) to a level of 11.58 m OD (2.07 m below the street level).

Overlying the brickearth was a layer of disturbed brickearth (136) which in turn was overlaid by a 0.4m thick sequence of floors and floor make-up layers (137, 138, 126, 127, 128, 132, 133, 134, 129, 135). These consisted of compact coarse sandy mortars which were alternately overlaid either by burnt deposits or silt deposits. The top of these deposits was at 12.15 m OD (1.48 m below the street level).

The floor/floor make-up sequence was overlaid by a 0.28 m thick deposit of light brown silt with occasional stones and mortar (125), containing fragments of Roman painted wall plaster. This layer was cut to the east side of the exposed section by a 1m deep cut (124) which also partially removed the floor sequence layers and the brickearth. The cut was filled by two silty layers (123 and 122) which contained mortar, tile and rough hewn slightly rounded stones (Kentish Rag stone).

The highest point of the deposits described above is 12.86 m OD (0.76 m below the street level). All other features and deposits within this trench post-date the Victorian sewer cut infill. These include five modern services (107, 105, 113, 111, 109) running east-west, and two north-south aligned modern service cuts (115, 117) which had removed the archaeological and natural deposits at the east and west ends of the exposed section.

A large rim of post-med pottery was recovered from context 121, and three sherds of Roman pottery (1st-2nd century) were recovered from context 136.



## 6.2 Trench 4

Natural gravel (404) was revealed at 9.32 m OD (0.42 m below the top of the basement floor slab).

Two features were present - to the east of the trench was an approximately north-south aligned modern cut (407) which probably represents the construction cut for a cable duct known to run north-south just to the east of the trench. The other feature was a disused water pipe (405, 406) running north-south across the eastern half of the trench.

Two pieces of decorative marble slab (19th-century) were recovered from context 408, the fill of cut 407. These pieces are a sample from large quantities of 19th-century architectural fragments which were left unexcavated within the cut.

## 6.3 Trench 5

Natural gravel (511) was revealed at 8.38 m OD (1.4 m below the top of the existing floor slab). This was overlaid by a 1.2 m thick sequence of compacted sandy-silts (504-510), some of which were horizontal with others sloping from east to west. These layers were difficult to distinguish due to their similar characteristics. They were overlaid by the concrete floor and its make-up layers (503, 502, 501).

Roman pottery was recovered from contexts, 503, 504, 505, 506, and 510.

# 7 Finds and palaeoenvironmental material

## 7.1 Roman Pottery

The Roman pottery was examined by Paul Booth (OAU). He writes as follows:

Only 17 sherds of Roman pottery were recovered from the evaluation. These varied in size, but all were in fairly good condition and did not indicate extended periods of redeposition.

All the material was consistent with a 1st-2nd century date range, but no sherds were recognised which need necessarily have been 2nd century at the earliest. The only vessel types represented by rims were a samian Drag. 29 bowl (one of two South Gaulish samian sherds), two bead rim jars of Flavian and mid 1st-early 2nd forms and a carinated cup or small bowl in a fairly fine reduced fabric. This vessel was reminiscent of the Gallo-Belgic cup type Cam 56 and a 1st century date would be expected. Three sherds of amphora included two probably of Dressel 20 and a handle perhaps from a Dressel 2-4. None of these is closely dateable.

It is possible therefore that the entire assemblage falls within the second half of the 1st century AD, with nothing later than the early 2nd century at the latest. There was no suggestion of chronological development in the groups from successive contexts and the whole assemblage was probably relatively close in date. Description detail on the pottery assemblage is listed in Appendix 2.

## 7.2 Other finds

Two classes of finds were related to the Roman building in Trench 1. Firstly, a small number of wall plaster fragments were recovered from layer 125. Only one fragment showed slight traces of red paint, but all the fragments were heavily weathered, and it is possible that all were originally painted. Pieces of Roman roof tile were present in several contexts in Trench 1 (122, 123, 125, 127, 137).

The only other finds from the evaluation were small quantities of animal bone (see 7.3 Palaeoenvironmental Material), a single sherd of 18th-century pottery (layer 121) and two 19th-century architectural fragments from Trench 4, Layer 408. The latter were identified and described by Julian Munby (OAU; see Appendix 2).

## 7.3 Palaeoenvironmental material

### 7.3.1 Palaeoenvironmental analysis

Two samples were analysed by Dr Mark Robinson, who writes as follows:

Two samples from Roman deposits at Faraday Buildings were floated onto a 0.5 mm mesh in order to recover charred plant remains. The flots were dried and scanned under a binocular microscope. The results are given in Table 1.

Sample 5 (Ctx 128), which comprises occupation debris from a floor, contains about 80g of charcoal, mostly oak. It includes small diameter pieces of slowly grown oak with the bark on, which probably represents branchwood used as fuel. Small fragments of burnt bracken are also present in the sample.

Sample 6 (Ctx 136), which was from a Roman constructional deposit, contains much smaller quantities of charcoal and a very little cereal processing debris. The single glume base of spelt wheat is appropriate to a Roman date.

No further work is recommended at this stage.

Table 1: Charred Plant Remains

			Sample	5	6
			Context	128	136
			Sample volume (litres)	1.5	6
<i>Pteridium aquilinum</i>	bracken	- frond frag.		2	-
<i>Alnus/Corylus</i> tp.	alder/hazel	- charcoal		+	+
<i>Quercus</i> sp.	oak	- charcoal		+++	++
<i>Triticum spelta</i>	spelt wheat	- glume base		-	1
Cereal indet.		- grain		-	2
Weed indet.		- seed		-	1

### 7.3.2 Comment on palaeoenvironmental results (D. Wilkinson)

Dr Robinson's analysis of the sample (5) from context 128 is of interest in that this black deposit over a floor surface had been thought to be an occupation layer. The high concentration of charcoal from such a small sample, and the presence of branchwood, show that this is probably a deposit created by a deliberately-laid domestic fire. The analysis of Sample 6 is less instructive, although the presence of charcoal and wheat confirm that this brickearth layer had been disturbed. Further samples, from layers 122, and 123, were taken, but the stratigraphical analysis showed that the dating and interpretation of these deposits is uncertain (Section 6.1). The samples (Nos 1-4) were therefore sieved for finds recovery, but were not analysed further.

## 8 Discussion

### 8.1 Archaeological deposits

The top of natural gravel was found at three very different levels in the three trenches, and the natural brickearth capping survived only in Trench 1 (Fig. 4). This shows that more than 2000 years of activity on the site has cut deeply into the natural deposits over much of the site, a process which probably began with quarrying in the early Roman period. The level of the top of brickearth in Trench 1 (11.58 m OD, 2.07 m below street level) is likely to be fairly close to a 'true' level for this deposit - the surviving depth of brickearth, 1.4 m, suggests that it was not badly truncated.

Natural gravel in Trench 5 (Fig. 5) was found at 8.38 m OD - allowing for the slope this means that well over 3 m of brickearth and gravel have been cut away. The deposits above the gravel in this trench (compacted sandy silts) suggest deliberate backfilling, with the use of some domestic rubbish (pottery and bone). First century quarry pits have previously been found both east and west of Faraday buildings (Figure 6), and it is clear that the area was well-used as a source for building material. It is therefore most likely

that the layers found in Trench 5 are within a quarry pit, and the pottery recovered would be consistent with a 1st-century date (Section 7.1). However, both interpretation and dating should be regarded as tentative due to the small size of the excavated sample.

Just over 1 m of archaeological stratification survives in the area of Trench 5. Any archaeology which originally existed above this has been removed by subsequent activity, including the construction of the basements of the existing buildings. In Trench 4 (Fig. 5) any significant archaeological deposits must originally have finished at a shallower depth than in Trench 5, and all have been removed by later activity.

In Trench 1 (Figs 3, 4), the top of the natural brickearth had been disturbed (layer 136), perhaps during construction activity. Above this was a sequence of at least three and possibly four coarse mortar floors (giving a Roman ground level of 11.7 to 12.1 m OD) which is twice interrupted by silt layers. The silt layers indicate periods when the floors were not kept clean, and when the building may have seen little or no use. A thick layer of black material over one of the floors could have been formed during the occupation of the building, or may relate to a fire. Abandonment of the building is certainly indicated by a deep layer of silt (125) which contained both roof tile and wall plaster - presumably deposited as the building decayed or was robbed of building material.

The mortar floors, painted wall plaster and roof tile all suggest a well-constructed building of some pretension which was in use over a reasonable period of time; no information about the plan or use of the building was recovered. The dating evidence, three sherds of 1st- to early 2nd-century pottery, is very sparse, but a modest case can be made for believing that a building did exist here in the first century, as otherwise we might expect this area, too, to have been cut away by quarries at that time. The presence of a building is also important because it shows that this part of Kneightrider St is not on the line of a Roman street, and must have been laid out at a later date. Other Roman buildings are known in the area around Faraday Buildings, and in general we should probably imagine a picture of a sparsely-occupied, semi-industrial area which was gradually infilled by the expanding development of the city. The western development of the city is not yet well understood, and the possibility should be borne in mind that some of the earlier buildings could belong to suburban villas (Perring 1991: 69).

Above layer 125 the archaeological sequence had been cut away (cut 124 filled with 122, 123). This may be the edge of a pit or other feature, but no dating evidence was recovered.

Victorian and post-Victorian activity, mainly excavations for services, has removed much of the archaeology, including any evidence from the Saxon and Medieval periods, so that the above account is based on a small surviving pocket of stratification. The top of the significant archaeology is 0.8 m below current ground level, and the surviving pocket measures c. 0.7 x 1.2 m in area (it could continue under the services in the south of the trench).

## 8.2 Potential impact of the proposed development

Figure 7 summarises the potential impact of the proposed development. The figure was prepared using GMW Drawings of the existing basement and sub-basement (Nos AL(0.2)02 Rev.A; AL(0.2)03 Rev.A) and of the proposed new building (No. TP05 Rev.A).

### 8.2.1 Area south of Knightrider St

The deep basements in this part of the building will have removed most if not all of the archaeology. The basement floor slabs here are at c. 6.5 m OD, some 5 m below the bottom of the archaeological sequence in Knightrider St - this means that only the lower part of very deep cut features (effectively, either wells or quarrying) could survive. Alternatively, it is possible that the Roman building found on Knightrider St was built on a terrace - if there is another deep terrace further down the slope, then it is just possible, though still unlikely, that some archaeological deposits could be preserved towards the southern limit of the site.

The current development proposals show the lowest floor slabs as either above or at the same level as existing floor slabs, so that disturbance will occur only from any deep services or foundations, or from the lifting and re-laying of floors (if required).

Given the factors presented above, the predicted impact of the current proposals on this area is negligible.

### 8.2.2 Knightrider St

At least one area of archaeology which merits further excavation (see 8.3.2) has been shown to survive in Knightrider St. The Faraday Buildings site lies within a poorly-understood part of Roman London, and evidence for a Roman building must therefore be regarded as being of interest. Knightrider St has been shown to contain a number of Victorian and later services, which will have destroyed much of the archaeology, but it is probable that other pockets of stratification survive.

Much of Knightrider St will be retained as a route into the new building. Services within this route are unlikely to be deeper than those already existing, and the predicted impact on the archaeology is therefore negligible.

The exception to the above is the area marked A on Figure 7, at the east end of the Street. The proposed new floor level for this area is at 8.8 m and any surviving archaeology, including that found in Trench 1, would therefore be impacted upon.

### 8.2.3 Area north of Knightrider St

One area of archaeology was identified in this area (Trench 5). Because it consisted of the fills of a possible quarry, the archaeology is of lesser importance than that found in Trench 1, but it still has the potential to yield useful information. Further areas of similar archaeology are likely to have survived, but their position and extent cannot be predicted, as this depends on the depth and areas of Roman quarrying or other excavating activities (e.g. rubbish pits).

Limited areas of sub-basement will have removed all archaeology. The remainder, labelled B on Figure 7, has a proposed new floor level of 8.8 m OD, which is 1 to 1.5 m below current floor levels. Surviving areas of archaeology will therefore be reduced by about a metre. The archaeology identified in Trench 5 would be completely removed.

### 8.2.4 General comments on predicted impacts

The foundation design for the new building, when drawn up, may show some disturbance below that discussed above. Archaeologically, this is only likely to affect the comments made for the area north of Knightrider St (Section 8.2.3), and then only if archaeology survives at a deeper level than that found in Trench 5.

One further potential source of impact may occur if the outer retaining walls of the current basements are removed/replaced in any part of the building. This may expose sections through any archaeological deposits which may survive behind the walls.

## 8.3 Recommendations

- 1 The archaeological deposits identified by the evaluation survive in very limited areas across the site and are the surviving remains from an extensive process of later truncation. It is not therefore recommended that the deposits should be preserved in situ.
- 2 Although limited, the surviving archaeology still has the potential to provide useful information about the use and development of the area during the Roman period. Accordingly, it is recommended that controlled archaeological excavation of the deposits be carried out before the new building is constructed. The principal aim of this work should be to gather further information about the date, plan, type and use of the Roman building identified in Knightrider St. To a lesser extent, the archaeology north of Knightrider St should be investigated to gain information about the quarrying and any other Roman activity, and to further examine the fill material, particularly rubbish deposits. The excavation work should include the recording of any sections exposed by removal of basement retaining walls.

## Appendices

APPENDIX 1 TABLE OF CONTEXT INFORMATION

CTX	TYPE	DEPTH	COMMENTS
101	Deposit	0.08 m	Existing tarmac surface
102	Deposit	0.20 m	Concrete make-up for existing road surface
103	Deposit	0.04 m	Sand make-up for existing road surface
104	Service	0.14 m	FE water pipe (live)
105	Cut	0.44 m	Trench for service 104
106	Service	0.14 m	FE water pipe (disused)
107	Cut	1 m	Trench for service 106
108	Service	-	FE pipe, function unknown
109	Cut	0.20 m visible	Trench for service 108
110	Service	-	Stone culvert service, function unknown
111	Cut	0.44 m visible	Trench for service 110
112	Service	0.18 m	FE pipe, function unknown (live gas?)
113	Cut	0.40 m visible	Trench for service 112
114	Fill	2.6 m	Fill of modern (post-Victorian) service cut
115	Cut	2.6 m	Modern (post-Victorian), N-S, service cut
116	Fill	2.6 m visible	Fill of modern (post-Victorian) service cut
117	Cut	2.6 m visible	Modern (post-Victorian), N-S, service cut
118	Fill	2.6 m visible	Fill of Victorian sewer cut
119	Cut	2.6 m visible	Victorian sewer cut

120	Layer	0.15 m visible	Strip of bitumen visible in north section within Victorian sewer cut infill
121	Deposit	0.01 m	Loose mid green brown sand with 10% small rounded gravel inclusions
122	Deposit	0.60 m	Friable dark grey silt, 5% oyster shell, occ. rounded stones (0.15-0.16 m diam.), tile and pot
123	Deposit	0.50 m	Tenacious dark grey brown silt, occ. tile, mortar flecks, charcoal, small stones
124	Cut	1.2 m	Possible robbing cut?
125	Deposit	0.28 m	Tenacious mid grey brown silt, 5% mortar flecks, moderate small to medium stones, pot and tile
126	Deposit	0.01 m	Compact light brown white sandy mortar
127	Deposit	0.04 m	Friable light grey brown silt, occ small rounded stones, occ red tile frags
128	Deposit	0.04 m	Friable dark grey black sandy silt, 50% charcoal
129	Deposit	0.20 m	friable white brown sandy mortar, 20% rough hewn chalk stone (0.10 m average diam.)
130	Layer	1.4 m	Natural brickearth clay
131	layer	-	Natural gravel
132	Deposit	0.01 m	Loose light red, burnt mortar
133	Deposit	0.04 m	Compact light white brown sandy mortar
134	Deposit	0.01 m	Loose light brown silty sand, occ. mortar flecks
135	Deposit	0.12 m	Friable mid brown gravelly sand, occ. mortar patches
136	Deposit	0.20 m	Friable mid grey brown clay sand, occ. charcoal and oyster shell
137	Deposit	0.01 m	Layer of fragmented red tile
138	Deposit	0.01 m	Small patch of rounded gravel (max diam. 0.01 m) imbedded into deposit 126
401	Layer	0.025 m	Existing tile floor of basement



402	Deposit	0.17 m	Concrete floor slab
403	Deposit	0.22 m	Concrete/rubble make-up for 402
404	Layer	-	Natural gravel
405	Cut	0.30 m	Cut for service 406
406	Service	0.12 m	Disused water pipe
407	Cut	0.66 m	Modern construction cut
408	Fill	0.66 m	Fill of 407
501	Deposit	0.20 m	Existing concrete slab floor
502	Deposit	0.08 m	Rubble make-up for 501
503	Deposit	0.02 m	Disturbed layer caused by construction of 501/502
504	Deposit	0.31 m max	Hard brown green sandy silt, (contained Roman pot)
505	Deposit	0.20 m	Compact light brown green sandy silt, (contained Roman pot and tile)
506	Deposit	0.17 m	Friable brown green sandy silt (contained Roman pot)
507	Deposit	0.11 m	Friable dark grey green silty sand, 2% charcoal
508	Deposit	0.15 m	Compact brown green sandy silt
509	Deposit	0.20 m	Friable light brown green sandy silt
510	Deposit	0.30 m	Hard green brown silty sand
511	Deposit	-	Natural gravel

APPENDIX 2 TABLE OF FINDS INFORMATION

CTX	FINDS DESCRIPTION
121	1 large pottery rim, 18th-century
125	Painted wall plaster. (Roman)
136	3 sherds - 1 sandy reduced frag, 1 fairly fine, micaceous reduced, burnished lines. 1 oxidised sand and iron, burnished flat base interior. 4 tile frags. 1st-2nd century.
408	Two pieces of marble slab. One bevelled, one ovolo-moulded edge. All faces polished except bottom. Probably 19th-century decorative element from previous building (internal feature?, lintel or door jamb).
503	2 Sherds sandy reduced - 1 bead rim of bead rim jar, as Marsh and Tyers 1978 type II A. 13 in particular. 1st-2nd century
504	8 Sherds. 1 sherd, S. Gaulish Samian. 1 sherd amphora probably Dressel 20. 1 sherd sandy reduced bead rim - joins 503 above. 1 sherd sandy reduced, shoulder with cordon. 1 sherd medium sandy, micaceous reduced. 1 sherd fairly fine micaceous reduced, carinated bowl/cup rim, loosely of CAM 56. 2 Sherds hard reduced grog tempered, both bases. 1st-2nd century.
505	1 sherd amphora - Dressel 20. 1st-3rd century.
506	1 sherd amphora. Long handle with deep groove/underside broken. Does not look like the normal Dressel 2-4. 1st-2nd century.
510	2 sherds. 1 Sherd S. Gaulish Samian. Rim, probably 29. No bead. 1 sherd grog and sand tempered. Rim, bead rim jar. (Marsh and Tyers 1978: IIA2-4). Flavian.

APPENDIX 3 BIBLIOGRAPHY

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## APPENDIX 4      ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The following information is summarised from the detailed background set out in the desktop report (OAU 1994).

### Prehistoric

Isolated Prehistoric finds from the Mesolithic, Neolithic, Bronze and Iron Age have been found within 500m of Faraday Buildings; however, there is no conclusive evidence for any substantial pre-Roman settlement in this area.

### Roman

The evidence of a few controlled excavations and observations made during construction work suggest that the site lay within a suburb to the west of the early Roman settlement. Some timber buildings are in evidence and the area appears to have provided building materials for the construction of roads and buildings, pottery for domestic use, and a place of burial for the early occupants of the town. A cemetery was excavated beneath St Paul's Cathedral, and by Roman law this would have to have been located outside the town.

Apparently belonging to this early period is the 'Western Stream' (Gaz. Nos 11, 14, 17, 15, see Figure 6), two artificial channels running north-south, parallel to, and immediately west of Addle Hill (20 m to the west of Faraday Buildings). Excavations into the channel have revealed associated wall and road features, all within 20 m of the Faraday Buildings Western boundary.

By the end of the first-century, urban expansion had spread into this western area. Faraday Buildings lay approximately 150 m east of the western city wall and a similar distance south-east of its main gate, Ludgate, constructed in around AD 200. Watling Street, the main east-west road which passed through Ludgate, ran parallel to the northern edge of Faraday Buildings (approximately 80 m north of the site).

Several stretches of Roman wall have been recorded running along the line of Knightrider Street (Gaz. Nos 5, 7, 9, see Figure 6); these date roughly between the late 1st and 4th centuries. It has been suggested that they constitute two near-parallel walls running east-west and forming part of a single complex. However, recent studies suggest that only the northern wall is continuous, possibly a precinct wall bounding a major building complex (Perring 1991: 60), and that the southern walls belong to several separate buildings within this enclosure. The most westerly observation of the 'long north wall' was made at the junction of Knightrider Street and Peters Hill (approximately 100 m to the east of Faraday Buildings). Knightrider Street, which closely followed the line of these walls, was considered likely to be a Roman street.

## Anglo-Saxon

Archaeological excavations have revealed little evidence of activity in this area during the early to mid-Saxon period. Sherds of chaff-tempered pottery, found in the area to the south of St Pauls Cathedral, provide the only clear indication of an early to mid-Saxon presence.

Pits and other features (including mortar mixers) belonging to the late Saxon period have been excavated in Knightrider Street, approximately 35 m to the east of the Faraday Buildings) and there is evidence that the 'Western Stream' had been re-cut and was in use at this time.

## Knightrider Street

Knightrider Street formed part of a major east-west thoroughfare, first documented in a charter of AD 888-9. The line of this road can be traced in the modern street plan; it follows a fairly straight course along Knightrider street east of Godliman street and joining Roman Watling Street near Cannon Street Station. It is not known whether the similarity between the line of this Anglo-Saxon street and the Roman 'northern long wall' is merely coincidental or due to the walls survival into this period.

## The medieval period

From at least as early as 1210, on the site of Faraday Buildings, to the north of Knightrider Street stood the Abbot of Peterborough's Inn, which by 1424 had been converted to function as the Bell Inn. The plan of its buildings remained visible, to the east of Bell Yard, until late in the 19th century.

To the south of Knightrider Street lay Mountjoy's Inn, originally a high status domestic residence which, although first documented in 1459, is probably older. It was a courtyard building with a cellared first-floor hall which John Stowe, writing in 1598, described as a 'great house builded of stone'.

The properties known to have occupied the sites around these buildings by the early 16th century are also likely to have originated during this period, but their origin, appearance, development and changing function remains unknown.

## The post-medieval period

In 1568 Mountjoy's Inn, and later several of the surrounding properties, were converted to use as the Doctors Commons.

To the west of Mountjoy's Inn, fronting onto Knightrider Street, was the College of Physicians, chartered in 1518. Prior to use by the college this house was the home of Lineacre, first president of the college and physician to Henry VII and Henry VIII.

## The Great Fire

Although documentary evidence tells us that rebuilding of Doctors Commons was undertaken in 1672, and a description of the buildings in 1867 suggests that at least some of them were built, or refaced, in brick. The survival of the Medieval street plan (until at least as late as the mid-19th century) suggest that the buildings of Knightrider Street largely escaped destruction during the Great Fire.

The demolition of the historic buildings on the site appears to have taken place in the late 19th century.

By 1932 the western half of the present building housed the Controllars Office of the London Telephone Service GPO and, with the exception of a 1960s extension to the north, the present buildings were all in place by 1949.

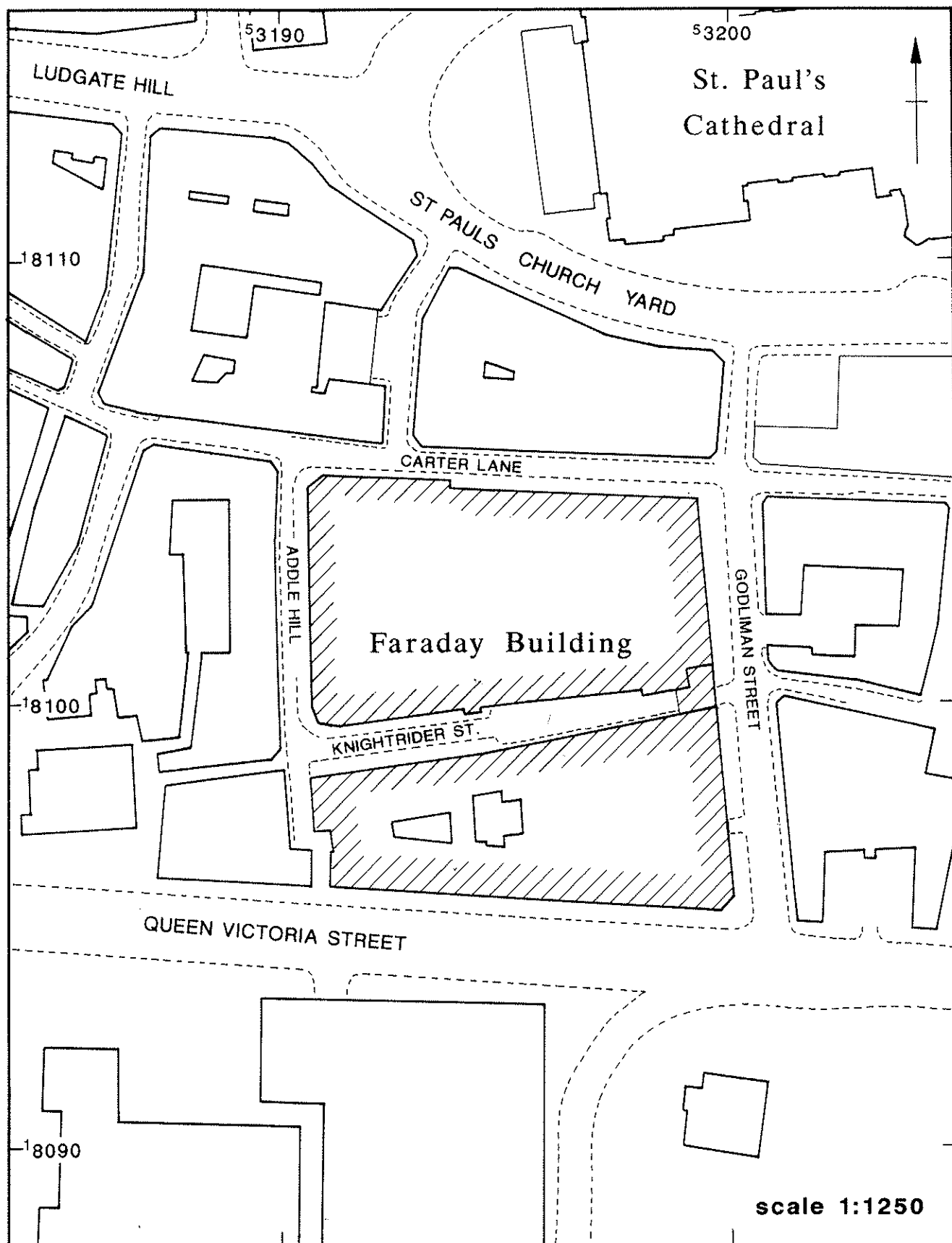
APPENDIX 5      GAZETTEER OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES AND FINDS  
AND LISTED BUILDINGS (see Fig. 6)

- 1      Queen Victoria Street, EC4.      (TQ 3201 8093)  
Isolated find (SMR 041111)  
Mesolithic. Quartzite Perforated Macehead
- Isolated find (SMR 041167)  
Iron Age. Bronze Fibula Brooch.
- 2      Blackfriars, near obelisk, EC4.      (TQ 3186 8090)  
Isolated find (SMR 041118)  
Neolithic. Chipped flint Axe.
- 3      Carter Lane, junction with Addle Hill, EC4. East Side. (TQ 31907 81056)  
Observation during excavations for a sewer in 1844. (SMR 040228)  
Roman (possibly Medieval) Wall. Running north/south, across Carter Lane.
- 4      1-3, Sermon Lane. EC4. (TQ 32050 81032 to 32050 81018)  
Observation during excavations for a sewer in 1844. (SMR 040572)  
Roman (possibly Medieval) Wall. Running north/south, apparently returning east under the houses at each end.
- 5      33, Knightrider Street, junction with Sermon Lane, EC4. (TQ 32044 81007)  
Observation during excavations for a sewer in ?1845. (SMR 040573)  
Roman Wall. Corner between two walls, one running east, the other south.
- Observation during excavations for a sewer in ?1845. (SMR 040574) (TQ 32042 81003)  
Roman Wall. Running north/south across Knightrider Street.
- 6      29-33 (odd), Knightrider Street, EC4.      (TQ 3203 8101)  
Museum of London excavation (Site code TAV 82)1  
Anglo-Saxon Lime kiln. First half of 10th century. 10th-11th century pits.
- 7      Peters Hill, EC4.      (TQ 3205 8092)  
Observation during sewer excavations in 1845. (Williams Observation 20) (SMR 040611)  
Roman Wall. Probably a continuation of (SMR 040660).
- 8      Wren House, 13-23, Carter Lane, EC4.      (TQ 3202 8103)  
Museum of London Site Monitoring (Site Code WHO 88)  
• (SMR 041626) Roman Wall or pierbase, floor surfaces and wall plaster;  
• (SMR 041627) Medieval Refuse pits Cellar walls Wall foundations;  
• Post Medieval. Two 16th-century wells.
- 9      Knightrider Street, junction with Peters Hill, EC4.      (TQ 3205 8099)  
• Guildhall Museum Excavation in 1961.  
• (SMR 040587) (Williams Observation 12) Roman. 1st - 3rd century. Walls;  
• (SMR 04058701) Roman. 1st - 3rd century. Wall running east/west; (SMR 04058701001) Upper part (probably rebuilt); (SMR 04058701002) Foundations;  
• (SMR 040588) Roman. 3rd-4th century Occupation layer (against northern face of wall

- SMR 04058701);
- (SMR 040589) Roman. 1st century Gravel quarry pit
  - (SMR 040590) Roman. 1st century Refuse pit (cut by wall SMR 040587)
- 10 39, St. Andrews Hill, EC4. (TQ 3187 8103)  
 Observation in 1935 (MOL WAP 88)  
 Medieval foundations
- 11 9-10, Wardrobe Place, EC4. (TQ 3189 8104)  
 Museum of London Trial Excavation (Site code WAP 88)
- (SMR 042720) Roman and Anglo-Saxon 'Western Stream' Silts contained Saxon pottery.
  - (SMR 042722) Post-medieval Well.
  - Observation in 1880. Medieval. 14th century Foundation arches, walls and worked stone
- 12 36-38, Carter Lane, EC4. (TQ 3190 8107)  
 Museum of London Site monitoring (Site code YHA 87) (SMR 04130808)  
 Medieval. Wall foundations. Possibly part of the Deanery of St. Pauls Cathedral.
- 13 1, Addle Hill and 57, Carter Lane, EC4.  
 Museum of London Trial Excavation (Site Code WAP 88)
- Roman Brickearth quarry pits Western Stream.
  - Medieval Deposits
  - Post Medieval. 17th-19th-century Cesspits and wells
- 14 3-4, Addle Hill, EC4. (TQ 31894 81024)  
 Museum of London Trial Excavation (Site Code WAP 88)
- (SMR 04119802) ?Medieval Wall foundations, robbed 17th/18th century Possibly part of the Kings Wardrobe 1359-1666.
  - (SMR 041782) Roman Quarry pits (sealed by SMR 041783)
  - (SMR 041783) Roman Dumps (overlain by SMR 04119802) Possibly associated with 'Western Stream'
- 15 Bible House, 146, Queen Victoria Street, EC4. (TQ 3189 8097)  
 Museum of London Trial excavation (Site code BHO 86)
- Roman. AD 180 or later. Pits. Western stream
  - Anglo-Saxon. 11th century. Deposits
  - Medieval. Well. Pits
  - Post Medieval. 17th and 19th century Pits
  - Undated Surfaces
- 16 Baynard House, Queen Victoria Street/Upper Thames Street, EC4. (TQ 3194 8090)  
 Museum of London Excavation, Site Code MM 74.  
 Museum of London Excavation, Site Code BC 72.
- (SMR 042155) Roman Riverfront Wall. 3rd - 4th century
  - (SMR 04215501) Roman. 2nd-3rd and late 3rd-4th cent. Dump deposit (behind riverfront wall)
  - (SMR 04215501) Medieval. 12th century to present. Road surfaces and levelling dumps.

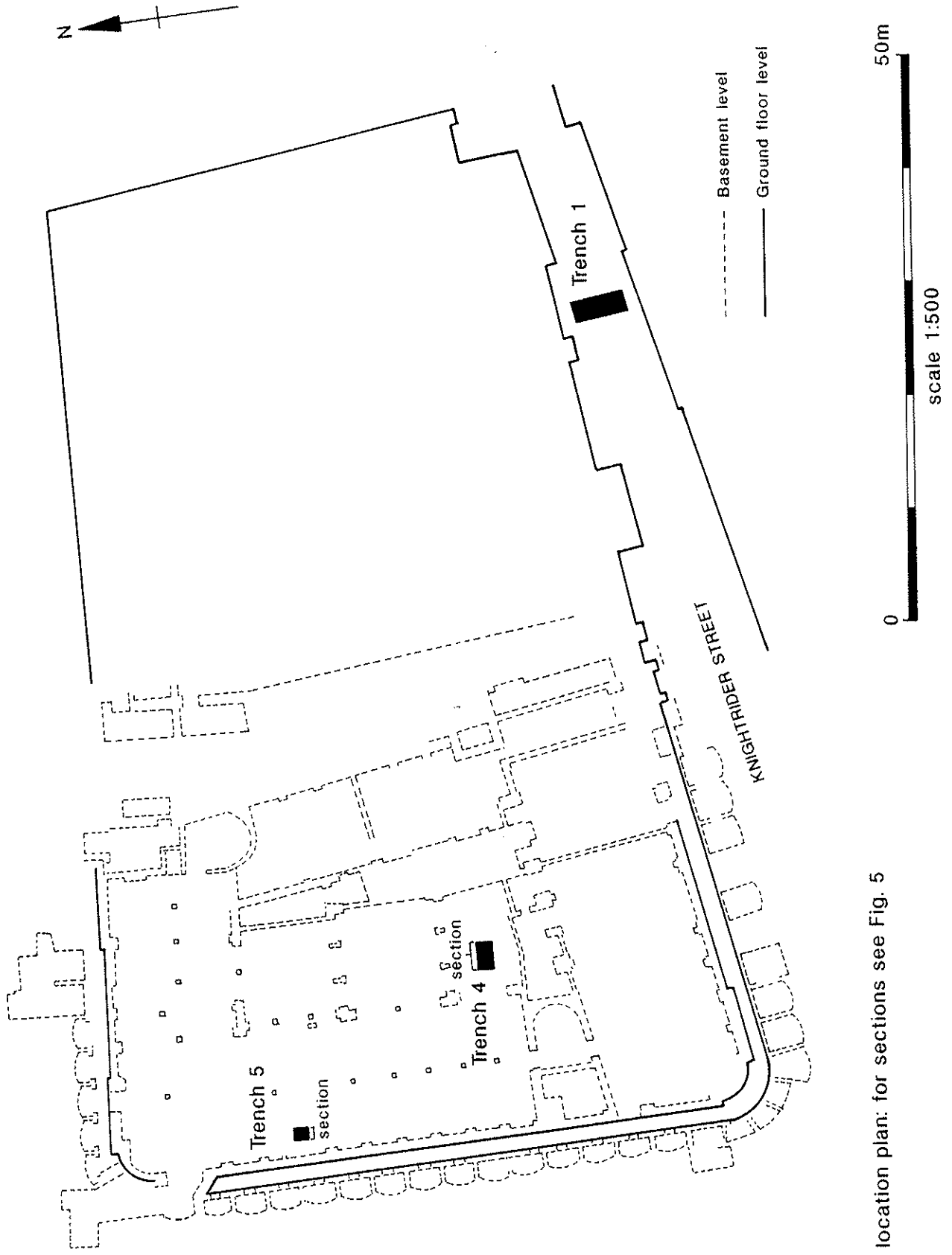
- (SMR 04215501) Medieval. 15th century. Building. Half timbered, traversing the road, suggesting a junction or termination.
  - (SMR 04215501) Post-Medieval. Early-mid 16th century. Sewer reusing fragments of ecclesiastical architectural mouldings.
- 17 1-3, St. Pauls Churchyard, EC4., 1-9, Ludgate Hill, EC4., 15, Creed Lane, EC4., 40, Carter Lane, EC4. (TQ 3190 8110)  
Museum of London Excavation (Site code PCH 85)
- Roman. 1st-2nd century 'Western Stream' Quarry pits and Refuse pits. Buildings of clay and timber
  - Anglo-Saxon. 11th century Pits
  - Medieval. 11th - 12 century Deposits. Within 'Western Stream'. Building
- 18 St. Pauls Churchyard, EC4. (TQ 320 810)  
(SMR 04130802) Medieval. 1284. Wall. St. Pauls precinct walls.  
Defined by modern street plan - Ave Maria Lane, Paternoster Row, Old Change, Carter Lane and Creed Lane.
- 19 St. Pauls Cathedral (TQ 3198 8111)  
Observation during 17th century  
Roman Pottery kiln
- 20 Faraday Buildings (south side)  
Medieval. 15th century or earlier Mountjoy's Inn (site of)
- 21 Faraday Buildings (north side)  
Medieval. 13th-century Abbot of Peterborough's Inn (site of)
- 22 Faraday Buildings (south side)  
Post-medieval College of Physicians (site of)
- 23 Knightrider Street  
Anglo-Saxon and later main thoroughfare
- 24 1, Wardrobe Place (TQ 31875 81050)  
Observation in 1935  
Undated Waterlain deposits within 'Western Stream' (MOL WAP 88)
- 25 Knightrider Street (TQ 31977 81001)  
OAU Evaluation 1995  
Roman floor/floor make-up deposits
- 26 Faraday Buildings (north-west basement) (TQ 31908 81035)  
OAU Evaluation 1995  
First century Roman gravel quarrying
- 27 Faraday Buildings (north-west basement) (TQ 31923 81017)  
OAU Evaluation 1995  
No archaeological deposits or remains





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Figure 1



Trench location plan: for sections see Fig. 5



Trench 1: Cross section  
(see Fig. 3 for location)

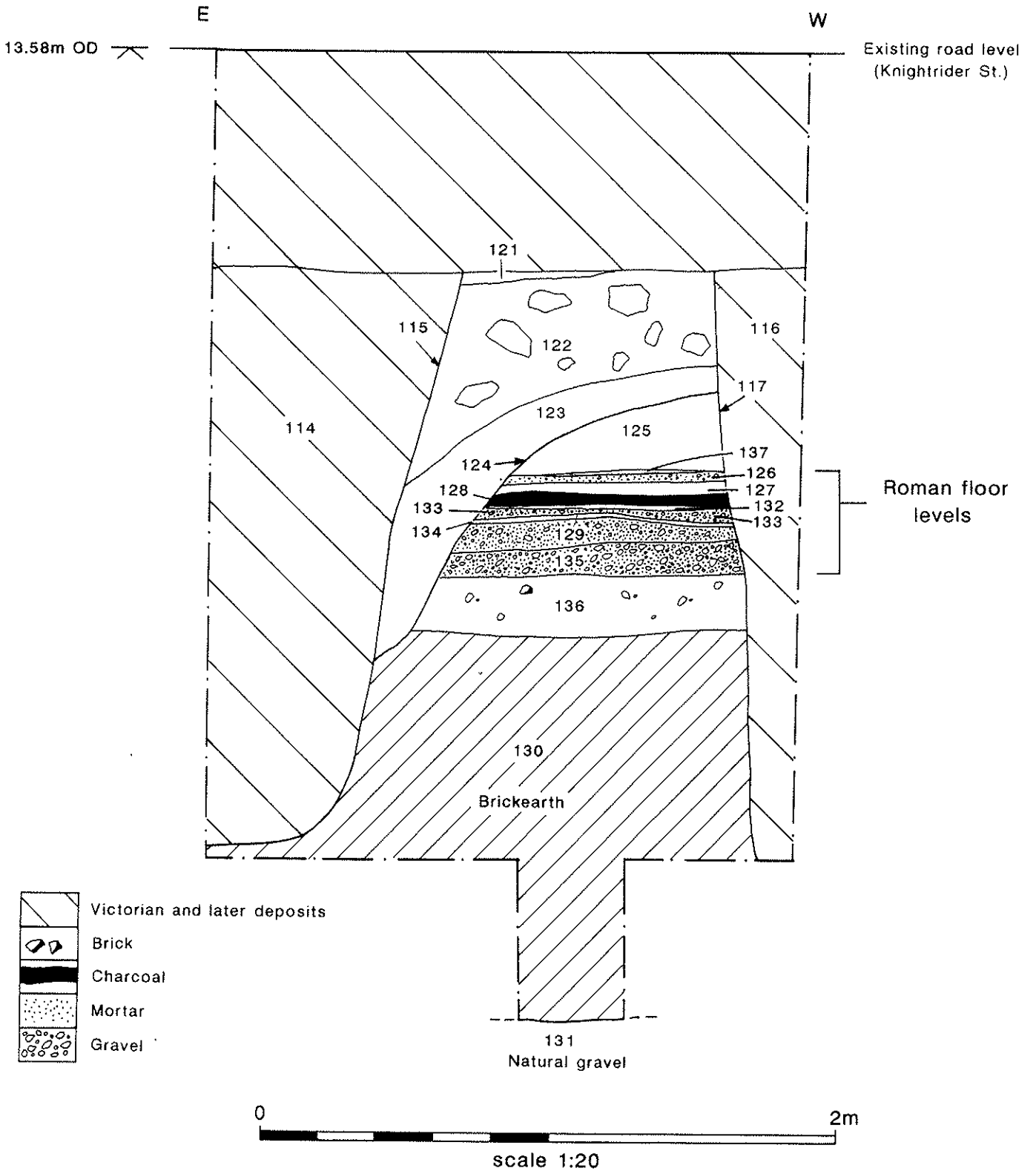
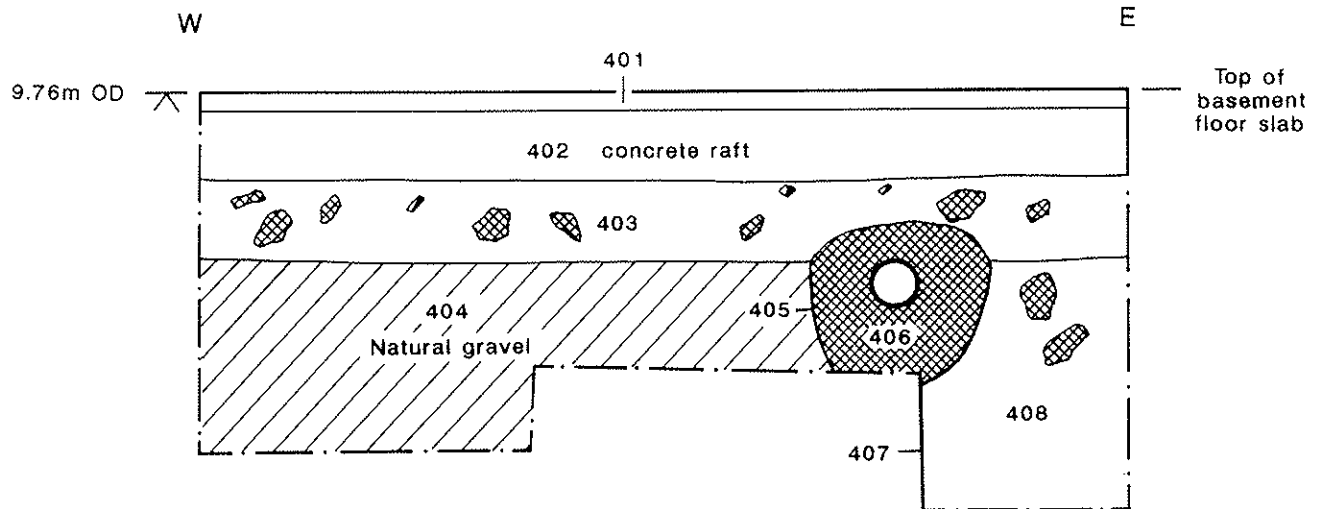
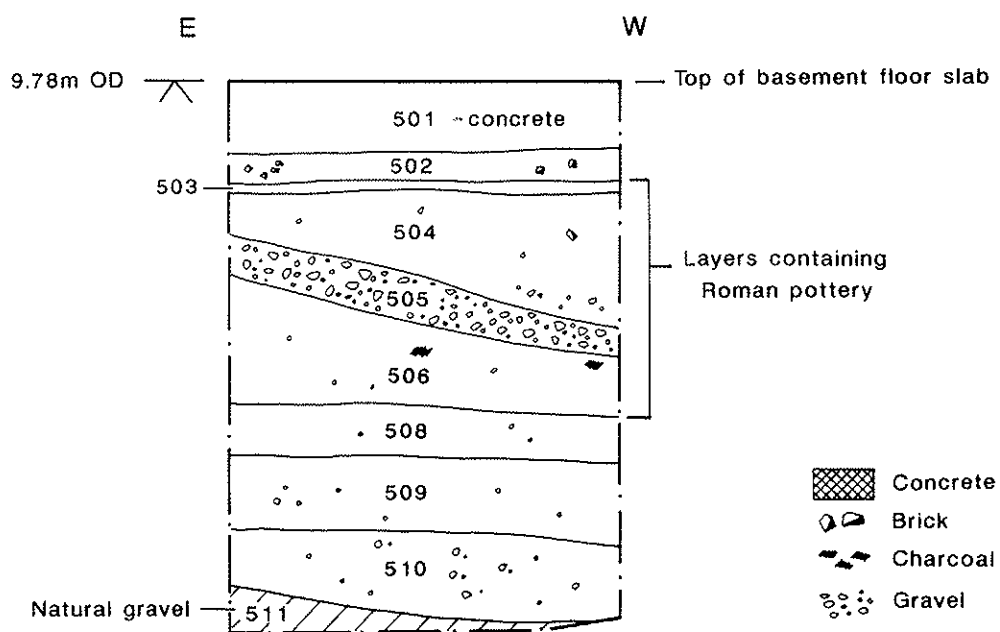






Figure 4

Trench 4: North section (see Fig. 2 for locations)



Trench 5: South section



-  Concrete
-  Brick
-  Charcoal
-  Gravel

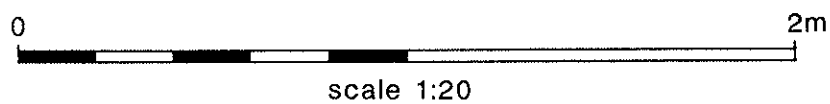
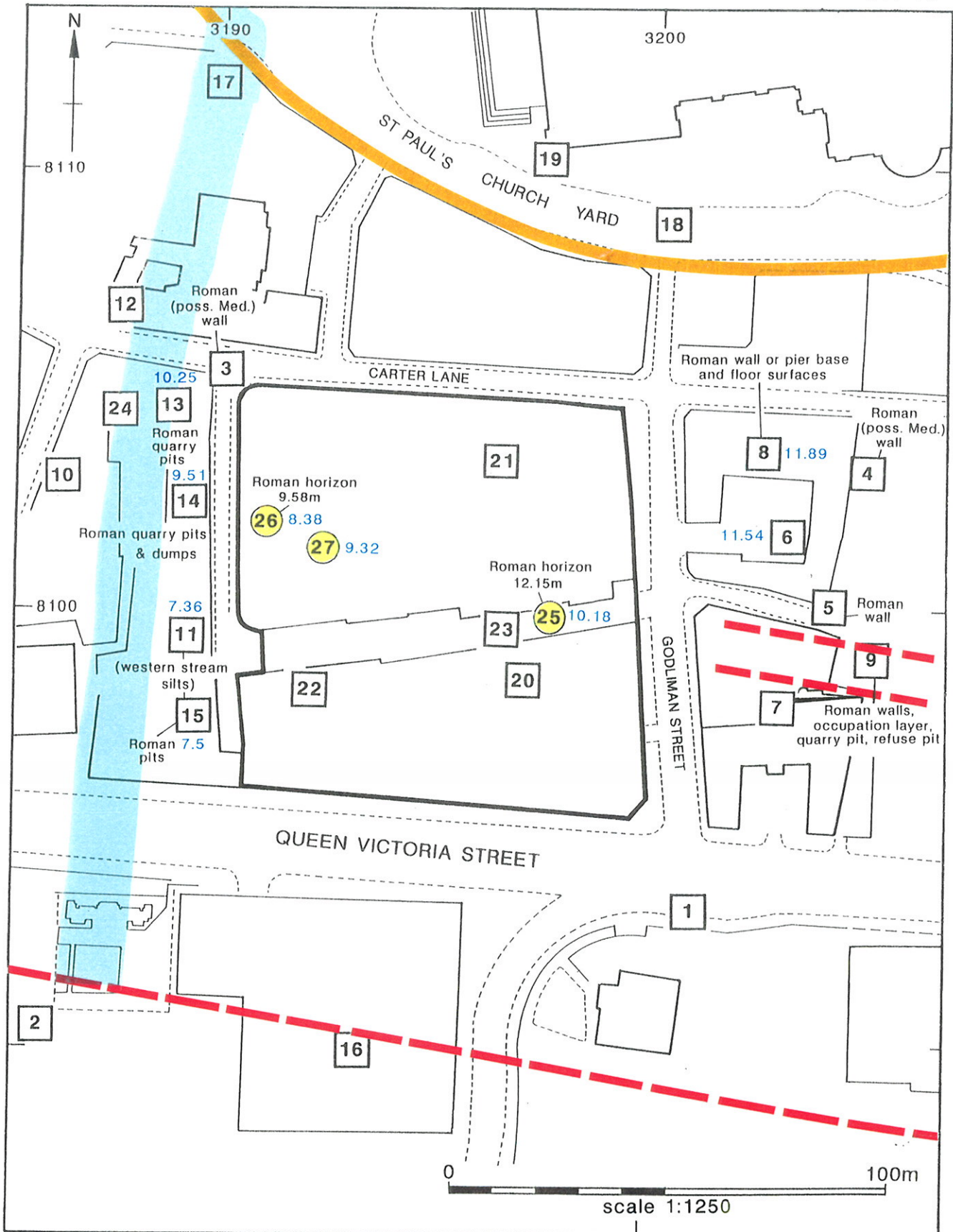


Figure 5



- 12 Archaeological sites
- 25 OAU trenches
- 11.54 Level of natural
- Projected line of Roman walls
- 'western stream'
- St. Paul's precinct boundary

Figure 6



Figure 7



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