

LONDON (LO)

MTL94
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**Fountain Court retaining wall,
Middle Temple Lane, London**

TQ 3125 8092

Watching Brief Report

**Oxford Archaeological Unit
August 1994**

Fountain Court retaining wall, Middle Temple Lane, London

NGR TQ31258092 Site Code MTL 94

Summary Report of Archaeological Watching Brief

Introduction

A member of The Oxford Archaeological Unit (OAU) observed and recorded archaeological deposits visible in a section of a trench excavated by contractors to rebuild a retaining wall, in Fountain Court, Middle Temple Lane, London. The work was carried out on behalf of The Honourable Society of the Middle Temple.

The site lies within the Temple complex founded by the Knights Templar in the 12th century, and it was therefore possible that deposits relating to the temple, or other medieval remains would be found. Roman burials and deposits dating from the Saxon period have also been discovered in close proximity to the site.

The scope of archaeological work carried out was agreed at an on-site meeting with Sue Cole of English Heritage.

The wall had already been rebuilt, and part of the trench backfilled, when the recording of the archaeological deposits took place on the 2nd of August 1994. Therefore all of the deposits were observed in section only.

After cleaning, the section was drawn, and photographed and descriptions were made of all of the deposits located. Datable finds were then retrieved from the section where they were visible and a collection of finds was also made from the trench spoil.

It is intended that the archive will be deposited with the Museum of London and a note will be published in the London Archaeologist.

Summary of results

The area of trench still open was some 10 m in length and 1 m deep. The maximum width of the trench was only 0.50 m, but in places was as narrow as 0.40 m, which restricted both visibility and access.

A thick layer of gravel, which ran through the entire length of the trench at the lowest visible level, appeared to be a compacted and well preserved surface. (A small area of this deposit was also observed in plan, where part of the section had collapsed). Cutting through the gravel surface, towards the east end of the trench was loam filled feature, some 2 m wide.

Above the feature and the gravel surface was a small sequence of brick and loam dump layers, which appeared to be demolition deposits. A vertically sided feature was observed to be cutting through the layers of demolition rubble, towards the west end of the trench. A thick layer of silt loam overlying the feature, and extended throughout the trench, was

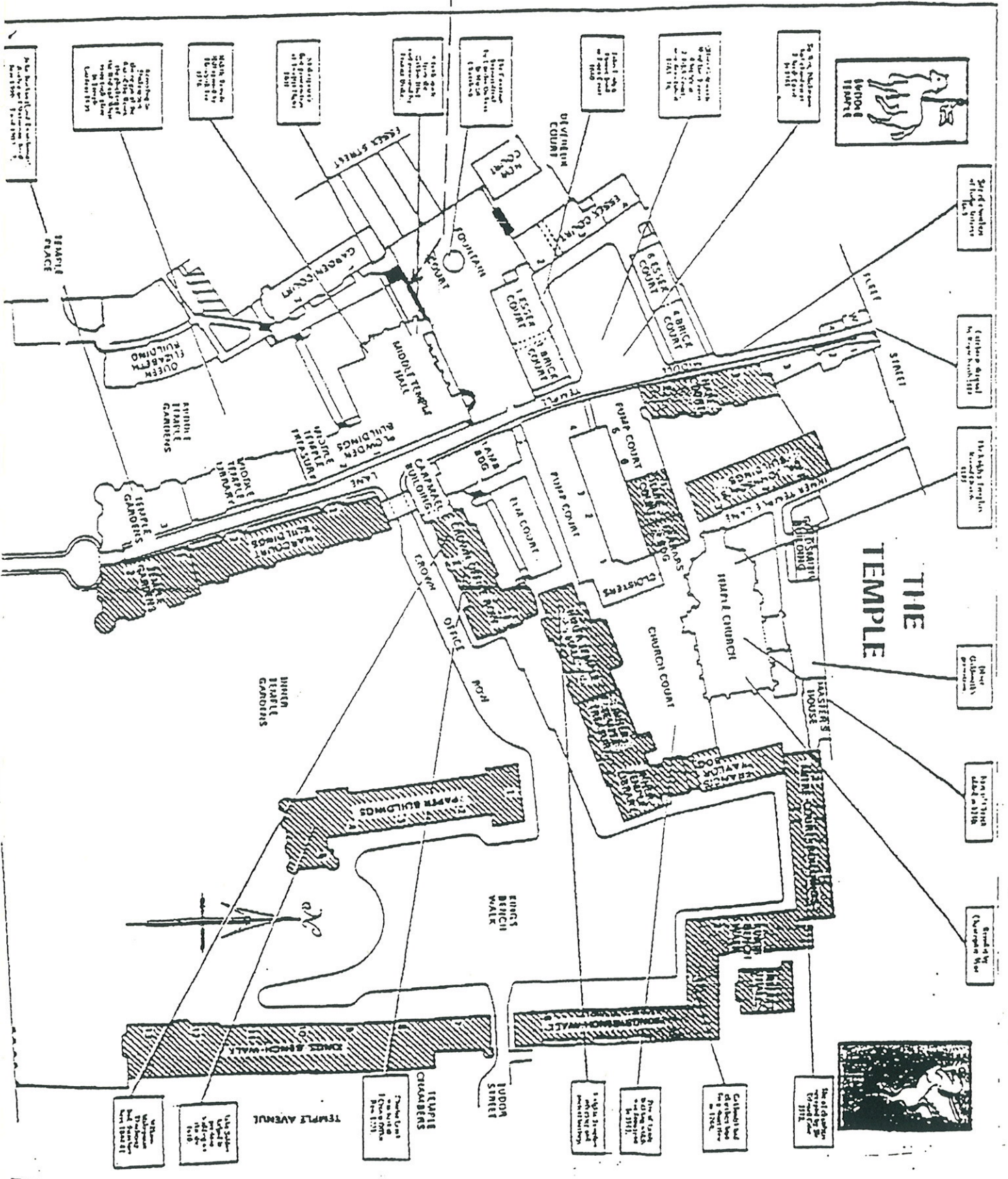
directly overlaid by the modern slabs.

A very small clay pipe bowl dating from the 17th century was found directly above the gravel surface and two small sherds of 17th century pottery were retrieved from the vertically sided feature which cut through the layers of brick rubble. Along with the post-medieval pottery and clay pipes collected from the trench spoil there were also a small number of medieval pottery sherds .

The observation of the strata in this trench appears to show that well stratified archaeological deposits dating from the post-medieval period survive in a good state of preservation in this vicinity and the discovery of medieval pottery in the trench spoil suggests that the contractors also encountered medieval deposits at the lower levels of the trench.

C Bell
OAU
August 1994

Fountain Court
retaining wall,



Part of fountain
at large tower
1875

Church square
in 1875

De Vindler fountain
1875

House
Gibson's
1875

Part of
1875

Ground by
1875



Part of fountain
at large tower
1875

Part of fountain
at large tower
1875

Part of fountain
at large tower
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