

7 - 15 Fleet Street London



Archaeological Watching Brief Report



Oxford Archaeology

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ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF REPORT**CONTENTS**

Summary.....	1
1 Introduction	1
1.1 Location and scope of work	1
1.2 Geology and topography	1
1.3 Archaeological and historical background	2
1.4 Acknowledgements	2
2 Project Aims and Methodology.....	2
2.1 Aims	2
2.2 Methodology.....	3
3 Results	3
3.1 Description of deposits.....	3
3.2 Finds	3
3.3 Palaeo-environmental remains	3
4 Discussion and Conclusions	3
Appendix 1 Archaeological Context Inventory	4
Appendix 2 Bibliography and References	4
Appendix 3 GLSMR/RCHME NMR Archaeological Report Form.....	5

LIST OF FIGURES

- Fig. 1 Site location
Fig. 2 Excavation Works During Watching Brief
Fig. 3 Plan 1001 and Section 1000

SUMMARY

During November and December 2002, Oxford Archaeology (OA) carried out an archaeological watching brief at 7-15 Fleet Street, London (NGR TQ 3105 8105). The work was commissioned by BBF Fielding Architecture during refurbishment works at the site. The watching brief did not reveal any deposits or features earlier than those relating to the phases of construction of the buildings from the mid 18th century to 20th century.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Location and scope of work

- 1.1.1 In November and December 2002, Oxford Archaeology (OA, formerly Oxford Archaeological Unit, OAU) carried out an archaeological watching brief at brief at 7-15 Fleet Street, London (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by BBF Fielding Architecture in respect of a planning application for refurbishment works.
- 1.1.2 The Honourable Society of Middle Temple are in the process of refurbishing 7-15 Fleet Street, London, which will include the installation of new lift shafts and new drainage. A condition was attached to the planning permission requiring an archaeological watching brief during groundwork likely to affect archaeological deposits. The condition was requested by the Planning and Archaeological Officer for the Corporation of London.
- 1.1.3 OAU undertook an evaluation (OAU 2001b) of the site in February 2001, on behalf of Wallis - Special Projects. The archaeological brief for this stage of the refurbishment work was set by, and a Written Scheme of Investigation agreed with the Planning and Archaeological Officer for the Corporation of London (OAU 2001a).
- 1.1.4 OA prepared a WSI for the current watching brief prior to monitoring the groundwork (OAU 2001a) which was approved by the Planning and Archaeological Officer for the Corporation of London.

1.2 Location, Geology and topography

- 1.2.1 The development is located within Farringdon Ward, c 50 m inside the west boundary of the City. It is situated at the west end of Fleet Street on its south side and is bounded to the north by Fleet Street, to the east by Nos. 1-3 Middle Temple Lane, to the west by Inner Temple Lane and by Hare Court to the south (NGR TQ 3105 8105).
- 1.2.2 Fleet Street extends along the edge of a relatively flat east-west gravel terrace. To the south the land slopes away to the north edge of the River Thames, some 200 m distant. The River would have been nearer to the site and the slope would have been more pronounced in the Roman and medieval periods.

1.3 Archaeological and historical background

- 1.3.1 The archaeological background to the watching brief was prepared for the Written Scheme of Investigation for the evaluation stage of the project (OA 2001a) and is summarised below.
- 1.3.2 The site lies c 600 m east of the former eastern limits of the Roman and medieval cities, and some 50 m west from the suggested limits of middle Saxon *Londonwic*.
- 1.3.3 Locally, little evidence of Palaeolithic has been found. Some 34 sites within the City have revealed prehistoric remains; isolated Mesolithic and Iron Age finds have been found within 40 m of the College of Arms.
- 1.3.4 The Roman town of *Londinium* was founded between AD 43 and AD 60. Two main east-west roads were built, flanked by important timber buildings. Expansion peaked during the first half of the 2nd century, with the town spreading west to cover an area of approximately one square mile and, around AD 200, the whole was enclosed by a massive city wall. A riverside wall was constructed in the mid-4th century, and the landward defences strengthened.
- 1.3.5 Very little is known of the city during the period of Saxon Germanic settlement, though it seems that the Roman town was deserted. Recent excavations indicate that by the 8th century London's commercial centre (*Lundonwic*), had migrated to the area around the Strand, to the west of the Roman town. During the 9th and 10th centuries London's commercial centre was again relocated within the city walls, probably as a defensive measure against raids by the Vikings, who succeeded in occupying London between 872 and 886 before being ousted by King Alfred and his forces. By the 13th century the walled city had again become fully established as a major international trading centre; it was densely populated and much of the modern street plan had crystallised.
- 1.3.6 From the Medieval period the area linking Westminster and the city, along the Strand towards Fleet Street became lined with palaces and houses of courtiers and rich merchants, and those serving their needs. The current building properly occupies one of these tenements although it dates to the 19th century.

1.4 Acknowledgements

- 1.4.1 The site work was monitored by Daniel Dodds and Daniel Bashford of OA. Staff from Wallis provided details about the excavation works.

2 PROJECT AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

2.1 Aims

- 2.1.1 To identify and record the presence/absence, extent, condition, quality and date of archaeological remains in the areas affected by the development.

2.1.2 To make available the results of the archaeological investigation.

2.2 Methodology

2.2.1 An OA supervisor attended the site during groundworks likely to expose archaeological deposits (Fig. 2). Observations made from cutting into the underlying deposits from the existing basement slab at 12.02 m OD.

2.2.2 All archaeological features were planned at a scale of 1:100 and where excavated their sections drawn at scales of 1:20. All excavated features were photographed using colour slide and black and white print film. A general photographic record of the work was made. Recording followed procedures detailed in the *OAU Fieldwork Manual* (ed D Wilkinson, 1992).

3 RESULTS

3.1 Description of deposits

3.1.1 The various excavation works during the watching brief revealed the natural top of gravel (1003) at 9.92 m OD, which was overlain by blue lias clay (1002) at 10.18 m OD. This had been cut by foundations for the existing building and consisted of 0.24 m thick layer of rubble make up (1001) and brick footings on a concrete base (1000) (Fig. 3, section 1000).

3.2 Finds

3.2.1 No finds were recovered during the watching brief.

3.3 Palaeo-environmental remains

3.3.1 No deposits suitable for environmental sampling were identified during the watching brief.

4 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

4.1.1 The results from the watching brief showed there to be no archaeological deposits or features surviving below the buildings in the area observed. This suggests that any archaeological features were removed during the various construction phases in the basement of the site from the mid 18th century to the 20th century.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT INVENTORY

<i>Context</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Depth</i>	<i>Width</i>	<i>Height</i>	<i>Comments</i>	<i>Finds</i>
1000	Structure	n/a	n/a	n/a	Brick footings	None
1001	Layer	0.24 m	n/a	n/a	Rubble Make up	None
1002	Natural	n/a	n/a	n/a	Clay	
1003	Natural	n/a	n/a	n/a	Gravel	

APPENDIX 2 BIBLIOGRAPHY AND REFERENCES

OAU, 2001a *7-15 Fleet Street, London Refurbishment Project*. Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Watching Brief during groundwork.

OAU, 2001b *7-15 Fleet Street, London*. Archaeological Evaluation Report

D WILKINSON ED, 1992, *OAU FIELDWORK MANUAL*

APPENDIX 3 GLSMR/RCHME NMR ARCHAEOLOGICAL REPORT FORM

1) TYPE OF RECORDING

Watching Brief

2) LOCATION

Borough: City of London

Site address: 7 - 15 Fleet Street, London.

Site Name: 7 - 15 Fleet Street, London. Site Code: FTT01

Nat. grid Refs: TQ 3105 8105 centre of site

Limits of site: N TQ 3105 8120 S TQ 3105 3095

E TQ 3120 8105 W TQ 3090 8105

3) ORGANISATION

Name of archaeological unit/company/society: Oxford Archaeology

Address: Janus House, Osney Mead, Oxford OX2 OES

Site director/supervisor: Daniel Dodds/Daniel Bashford Project manager: Jonathan Hiller

Funded by: BBF Fielding Architecture/Wallis (Kier Group)

4) DURATION

Date fieldwork started 18/11/02 Date finished: 17/12/002

Fieldwork previously notified? YES

Fieldwork will continue? NO

5) PERIODS REPRESENTED

Palaeolithic, Mesolithic, Neolithic, Bronze Age, Iron Age, Roman, Saxon (pre-AD 1066),
Medieval (AD 1066-1485), Post-Medieval, Unknown

6) PERIOD SUMMARIES

7) NATURAL

Type: First terrace Thames Gravels

Height above Ordnance datum: 10.25 m OD

8) LOCATION OF ARCHIVES

- a) Please provide an estimate of the quantity of material in your possession for the following categories:

NOtes 6	PLans 2	PHotos 46	NGtives 23
SLides 23	Correspondence	MScripts (unpub reports, etc)	
BULK finds	SMall finds	SOil samples	
OTHer			

- b) The archive has been prepared and stored in accordance with MGC standards and will be deposited in the following location:

- c) Has a security copy of the archive been made?: YES/NO

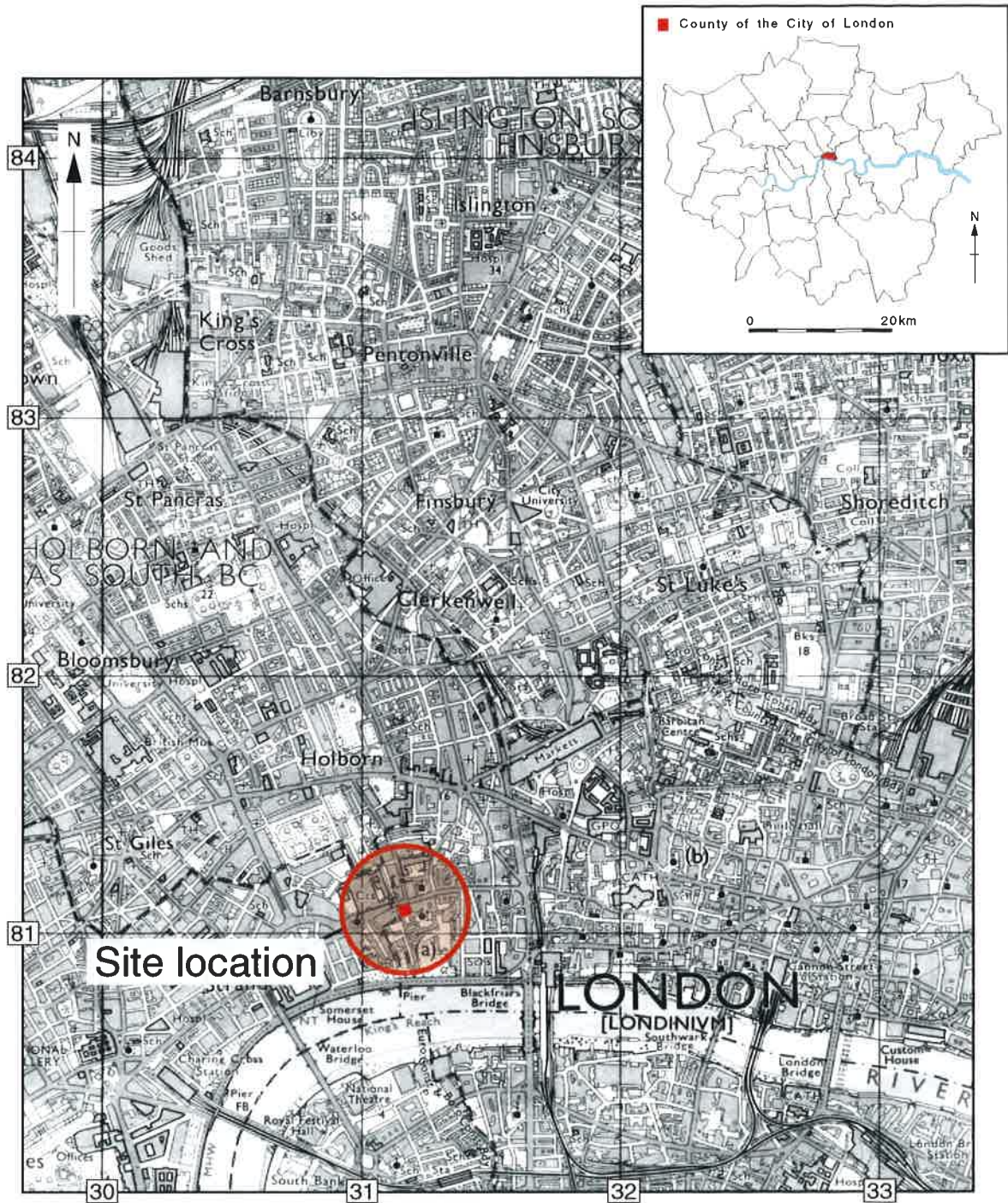
10) BIBLIOGRAPHY

See Appendix 2 Bibliography and references

SIGNED:

DATE:

NAME :



Scale 1:25,000

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Figure 1: Site location

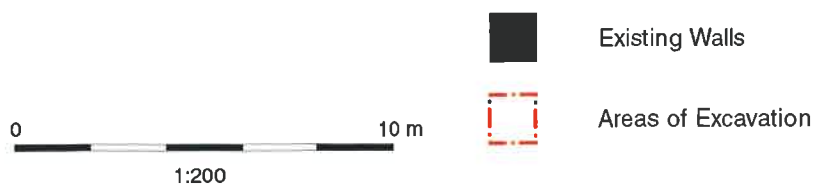
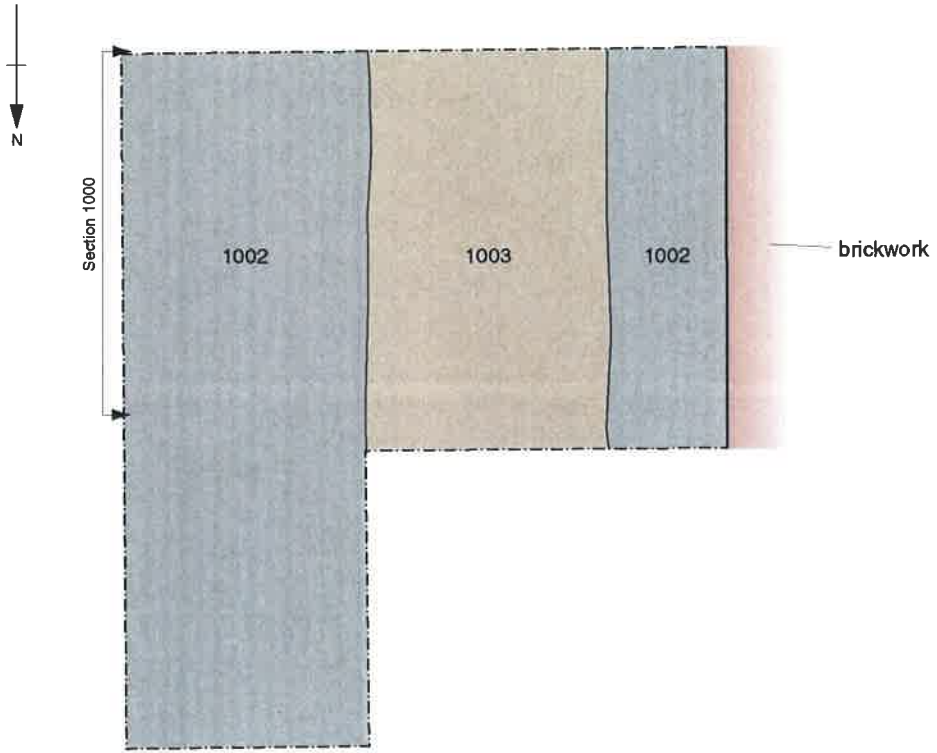
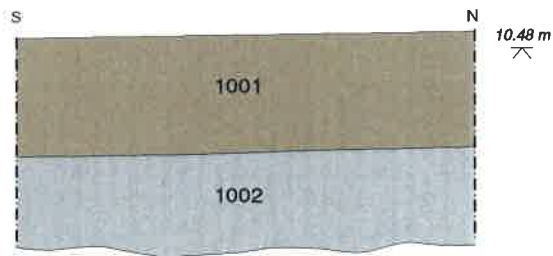


Figure 2: Excavation Works During Watching Brief

Lift Shaft Plan 1001



Section 1000






-  Rubble and made ground
-  Natural gravel
-  Natural blue clay

Figure 3: Plan 1001 and Section 1000



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