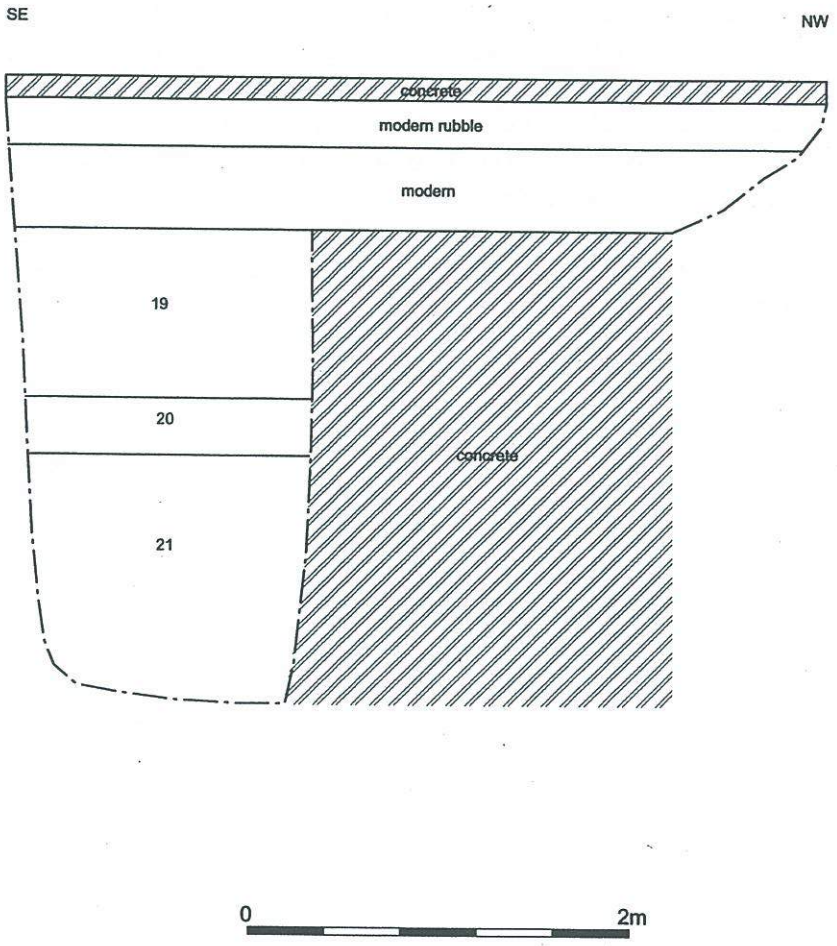

Fig 33 South facing section, TP308

Trial Pit 310 (Fig 34)

Watching Brief Trial Pit TP310	
Location	Southern area of the site
Dimensions	Approximately 0.80m by 3.60m
Modern ground level/top of slab	12.19m OD
Base of modern fill/slab	0.55m below present ground level (11.64m OD)
Depth of archaeological deposits seen	1.55m
Level of base of deposits observed	3.60m below present ground level (8.59m OD)
Natural observed	2.10m below present ground level (10.09m OD)

Archaeological deposits were recorded below modern rubble and concrete slab at 0.55m below present ground level. The latest was a garden soil type dark brown sandy silt deposit [22], which contained clay tobacco pipes dating from between 1700 and 1740 and pottery dating from between 1680 and 1846, overlay a layer of grey sandy silt and cess [23] at 1.9m below ground level. Layer [23] contained pottery fragments dating from between 1670 and 1700. This was dumped over a deposit of light grey silty clay [24] (at 2.1m below ground level), which capped a light greyish orange clay and gravel deposit [25] overlying a band of natural gravels [26]. Mid orangey brown natural clay was recorded at 3.30m below ground level. The lowest depth reached in TP310 was 3.6m below ground level.

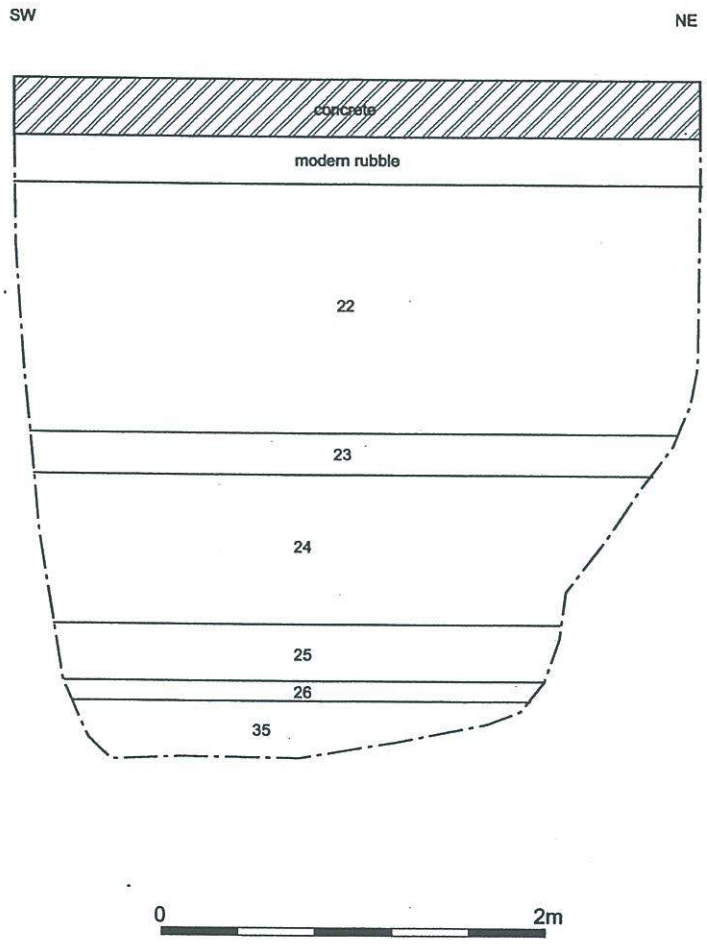

Fig 34 Southeast facing section, TP310

R:\Project\isli\1152\fig34

Trial Pit 311 (Fig 35)

Watching Brief Trial Pit TP311	
Location	Southern area of the site
Dimensions	Approximately 1.10m by 2.20m
Modern ground level/top of slab	14.07m OD
Base of modern fill/slab	N/A
Depth of archaeological deposits seen	No definite archaeological deposits were observed in TP311
Level of base of deposits observed	2.50m below present ground level (1.57m OD)
Natural observed	N/A

Two parallel brick walls running roughly northwest–southeast were sealed by modern rubble were recorded at 0.45m below ground level. They were not fully exposed and could only be seen in northeast and southwest facing sections. The walls were constructed with red bricks and greyish beige mortar. The area between the walls was backfilled with rubble and contained no dating evidence in form of pottery. However, both yellow and red bricks were present in the rubble backfill. Excavation of the trial pit was abandoned at 2.5m below ground level due to unstable nature of the backfill. Interior side of the northeast wall showed evidence of rendering and the structure was provisionally interpreted below present ground level as a backfilled cellar or a stairway leading to a cellar.

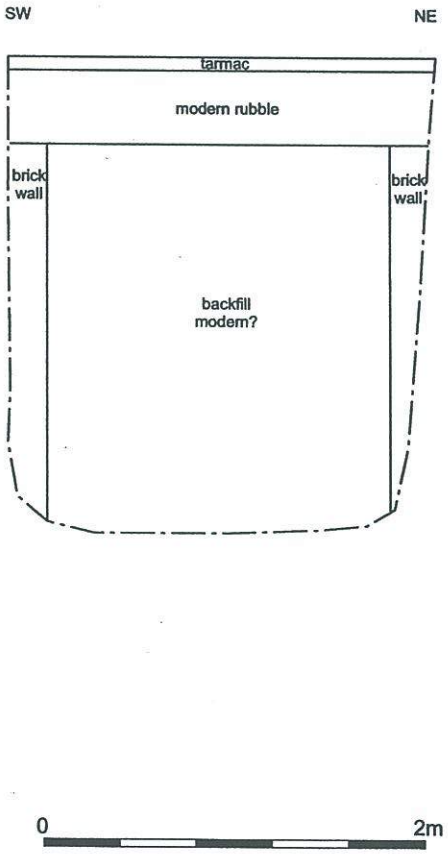

Fig 35 Southeast facing section, TP311

Trial Pit 313 (Fig 36)

Watching Brief Trial Pit TP313	
Location	North/Northwest area of the site
Dimensions	Approximately 0.80m by 3.80m
Modern ground level/top of slab	14.57m OD
Base of modern fill/slab	1.50m below present ground level (13.07m OD)
Depth of archaeological deposits seen	No archaeological deposits were encountered in TP313
Level of base of deposits observed	4.00m below present ground level (10.57m OD)
Natural observed	1.50m below present ground level (13.07m OD)

A modern concrete footing was encountered below modern rubble and concrete slab in TP313. The top of the concrete was at 0.55m and base at 1.5m below ground level. Below the concrete, a natural deposit of mottled orangey grey silty clay [27] overlying firm dark grey London Clay [28] at 1.95m below ground level was recorded.

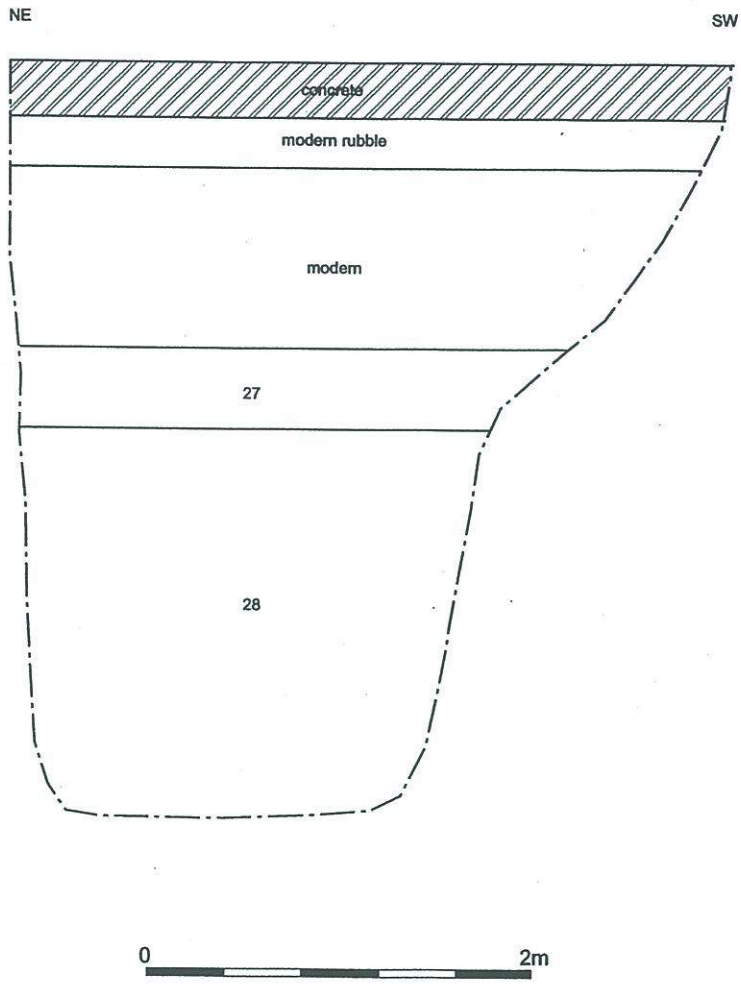

Fig 36 Northeast facing section, TP313

R:\Project\isli\1152\fig36

Trial Pit 314 (Fig 37)

Watching Brief Trial Pit TP314	
Location	Northwest area of the site
Dimensions	Approximately 0.95m by 3.0m
Modern ground level/top of slab	14.70m OD
Base of modern fill/slab	2.60m below present ground level (12.10m OD)
Depth of archaeological deposits seen	1.40m
Level of base of deposits observed	4.00m below present ground level (10.70m OD)
Natural observed	N/A

A modern yellow brick wall with substantial concrete footing was encountered below modern rubble, tarmac and concrete slab at 0.8m below present ground level. The base of the concrete intrusion lay at 2.6m below ground level. Archaeological deposits included a thick mid grey silty sand deposit [29] with abundant rubble and building material was recorded below the concrete footing. Pottery fragments found within [29] date from between 1740 and 1780. The deposit also contained some domestic rubbish and has been interpreted as a potential backfill or levelling deposit. The rubble levelling capped a dark grey slightly sandy and organic cess layer [30] at 3.90m below ground level. The trial pit was excavated to a depth of 4m below ground level and groundwater was encountered at approximately 3.6m.

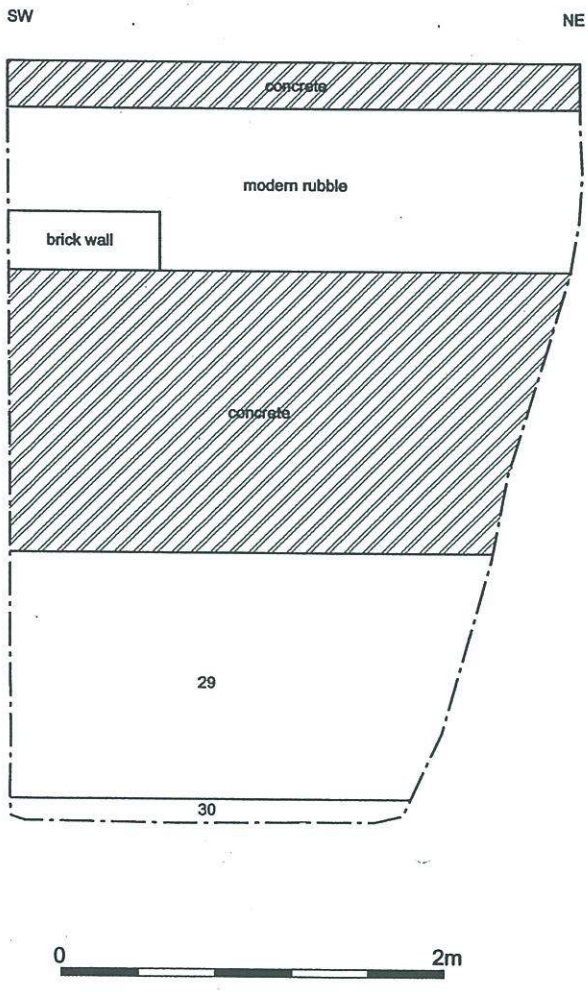

Fig 37 Southeast facing section, TP314

R:\Project\isli\1152\fig37

Trial Pit 316 (Fig 38)

Watching Brief Trial Pit TP316	
Location	Northwest area of the site
Dimensions	Approximately 1.10m by 4.20
Modern ground level/top of slab	14.97m OD
Base of modern fill/slab	2.00m below present ground level (12.97m OD)
Depth of archaeological deposits seen	2.20m
Level of base of deposits observed	4.20m below present ground level (10.77m OD)
Natural observed	N/A

A modern yellow brick wall with substantial concrete footing was encountered below modern rubble and tarmac at 0.5m below present ground level. The base of the concrete intrusion lay at 2m below ground level. Observed archaeological deposits included a thick mixed dark silty sand deposit [31] with abundant rubble and building material just below the concrete footing. The earliest deposit recorded was light grey mortar and rubble dump [32], which was capped by [31] at 3.25m below ground level. Trial Pit 316 was excavated to a depth of 4.2m below ground level.

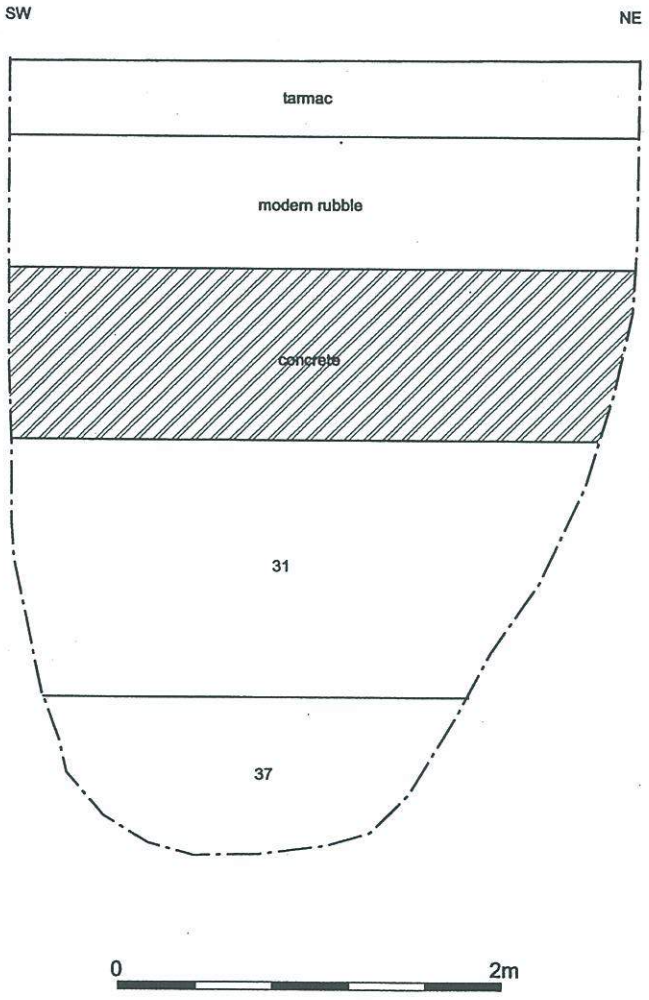

Fig 38 Southeast facing section, TP316

R:\Project\isli\1152\fig38

4 Archaeological potential

4.1 Factors determining archaeological potential of the South Mount Pleasant Mail Centre site

4.1.1.1 Natural geology

The eastern part of the site is situated on floodplain gravel while the western half of the site is situated on the underlying London Clay. From the recent trial work on the site to the north, it has been shown that natural deposits could be encountered at 1.5m below ground (12.97m OD) although this was observed in only one of the trial pits (TP313). The other trial pits, which were approximately 4m deep, did not encounter any natural deposits. The western limit of the site is at the interface between alluvium and underlying London Clay and alluvium may extend across the western edge of the site.

See section 3.2 for a description of the underlying geology.

4.1.1.2 Present land use

This part of the site is currently occupied by the Mount Pleasant Mail Centre. The present building was constructed in the early 20th century and is a seven storey building with basements. The height of the basement slab is not known.

4.1.1.3 Earlier (post-medieval–modern) buildings

The Sir John Oldcastle tavern and gardens was situated along the eastern side of the site and it appears that the tavern's ancillary buildings were demolished but that the main tavern building may have been converted into a smallpox hospital in the second half of the 18th century. Middleton's plans show the tavern to be 110 feet long (33.5m) and it is very likely that the tavern had a cellar, which could reasonable be expected to be up to 3.2m deep. The majority of the tavern building is likely to have been situated outside the site boundary although the rear of the building may fall within the site.

Late 19th century maps show terraced houses fronting onto Farringdon Road in the area once occupied by the hospital gardens. The 10 houses, which were built in the 1820s, were likely to have been three storeys high with basements extending up to 3.2m below ground level. The double row of cottages to the rear are likely to have been two storeys high and may also have been basemented.

Pipes carrying water from the New River Head are shown to have crossed this site however the depth of the pipes below ground level is not known and it is probable that modern water mains exist in this area.

Prison buildings, dating from both the 18th and 19th century, and the 19th century prison wall are known to have existed on this site. Middleton's plans and sections (Fig 10, 11, 12, 13 and 14) show the foundations of the prison extended down to 10 feet (3.05m) below ground level but it may have been necessary to excavate below this level in certain areas where the ground was softer. Below the prison buildings was a complex drainage system that emptied into the Fleet. Middleton's plan and section drawing of the drainage system (Fig 9) show he intended the drains to be between 15 and 20 feet (4.5m to 6.1m) below ground level. The foundations for the perimeter wall (see Fig 14) were intended to be 6 feet 8 inches (2.06m) below ground level but again they may have exceed this depth if the ground conditions were unsuitable.

The extent and depth of the 19th century additions to the prison are not known but could reasonably be expected to be of a similar depth to the 18th century buildings.

The impact of previous buildings would be to have truncated any archaeological deposits to a depth of between 2m and 6m, below the 19th century ground level, within the footprints of these structures.

4.1.1.4 Depth of archaeological deposit

From the recent trial work on the site to the north it has been shown that archaeological deposits survive between at 2m below ground level.

4.1.2 Archaeological potential

The nature of possible archaeological survival in the area of the proposed development is summarised here, taking into account the levels of natural geology (see section 3.2 and relevant levels OD in section 3.4), the level and nature of later disturbance and truncation (see section 4.1) and the nature of archaeological deposits and features known from adjacent sites (see section 3.4).

4.1.2.1 Prehistoric

Previous finds from the area indicate that there is low potential for *in situ* and redeposited Palaeolithic remains to be present on the site but there is a slightly higher potential for de-posited remains to be present within the underlying gravel.

Although a single Mesolithic artefact has been found within the vicinity of the site there is a low potential for evidence of Mesolithic remains such as scatters of burnt pebbles and struck flints within any alluvial deposits.

The possible presence of alluvium on the western side of the site also means the site has a moderate potential for palaeoenvironmental evidence. Such deposits are could contain plant and animal remains (e.g. diatoms, forams, pollen, snails, insects and seeds) and could provide further information about past environments.

Previous finds from the area indicate that there is also a low potential for encountering later prehistoric remains including Bronze Age and Iron Age cut features such as field boundary ditches.

Although prehistoric remains would be of local significance there is nothing to suggest that they may have either regional or national importance.

4.1.2.2 Roman

Isolated archaeological remains from the Roman period have been recorded in the immediate vicinity and might be expected on site but the site is considered to have a low potential for finds dating from the Roman period as the site is outside the Roman City and some way to the north of a Roman Road.

Although any remains dating from the Roman period would be of local significance there is nothing to suggest that they would have either regional or national importance.

4.1.2.3 Saxon

A few Saxon remains have been found to the southwest of the site, in the vicinity of the Farringdon Road, and there is a low potential that cut features dating from this period will be found on the eastern side of the site.

Although these remains are clearly of local significance there is nothing to suggest that they may have either regional or national importance.

4.1.2.4 Medieval

Archaeological remains from the medieval period have been recorded in the immediate vicinity and might be expected on site. There is cartographic and documentary evidence to suggest that at least the western part of the site was used as a public laystall in the post-medieval period and this may have been a continuation of late medieval dump activity. There is a moderate to high potential for dump deposit to be present on the site. Excavation of a similar rubbish mound at Seward Street has shown that a significant depth of material may exist on the site.

The late medieval Sir John Oldcastle tavern and its gardens were known to have occupied the eastern side of the site and there is a moderate potential that remains such as cellars, foundations and wells may survive on the site.

Although these remains are clearly of local significance there is nothing to suggest that they may have either regional or national importance.

4.1.2.5 Post-medieval–modern

Archaeological remains from the post-medieval–modern period have been recorded in the immediate vicinity and might be expected on site. There is a high potential for encountering remains associated with the 18th and 19th century prison that is known to have existed on the site. This remains could include foundations, cellars, wells and drains.

There is also a high potential for encountering 18th century dump deposits on the site.

In addition, there is a moderate potential for encountering remains of the Sir John Oldcastle Tavern and the later smallpox hospital that survived later 19th century truncation. There is also a moderate potential for encountering remains of industrial activity that took place on the site of the smallpox hospital in the early 19th century. In addition to structural remains, such as foundations and basement walls, there is a high potential that other remains such as cesspits and wells to survive on the site.

There is a high potential for finding remains of the 10 terraced houses built in the 1820s and facing onto Farringdon Road and the later cottages built to the rear. These remains could include basements, foundations, wells and cesspits.

There is also the remote possibility that the prison gardens and the smallpox hospital gardens were used as burial grounds, although there is no documentary evidence to support this. Therefore there is a low potential for encountering post-medieval burials in this area of the site.

There is a low potential of finding remains of 18th century water supply from New River Head such as wooden pipes and trenches.

Although these remains are clearly of local significance there is nothing to suggest that they may have either regional or national importance.

4.2 Factors determining archaeological potential of the North Road Area

4.2.1.1 Natural geology

The eastern part of the site is situated on floodplain gravel while the western half of the site is situated on the underlying London Clay. From the recent trial work on the site it has been shown that natural deposits were encountered at 1.5m below ground (12.97m OD). The western limit of the site is at the interface between alluvium and underlying London Clay and alluvium may extend across the western edge of the site.

During an archaeological excavation on the site in 1992 (Fig 24, Site 3), alluvium was found at *c* 13m OD and in some areas of the site the alluvium was up to 1.2m thick.

See section 3.2 for a description of the underlying geology.

4.2.1.2 Present land use

Loading bays in an open area below ground level currently occupy this part of the site. Ground level adjacent to the open area on Phoenix Place is 18.75m and the slab lies at *c* 14.7m OD.

4.2.1.3 Earlier (post-medieval–modern) buildings

The gardens belonging to the Sir John Oldcastle tavern were situated along the eastern side of the site and it appears that after the tavern was demolished the gardens became a smallpox hospital garden. When the smallpox hospital was moved the building was converted to industrial use. The 10 terraced houses fronting onto Farringdon Road, built the area once occupied by the hospital gardens, were likely to have been three storeys high with basements extending up to 3.2m below ground level. The later cottages built to the rear of these properties were likely to have been two storeys high but again may well have been basemented.

Prison buildings, dating from both the 18th and 19th century and the 19th century prison wall are known to have existed on this site. Middleton's plans and sections (Figs 10, 11, 12, 13 and 14) show the foundations of the prison extend to 10 feet (3.05m) below ground level but it may have been necessary to excavate below this level in certain areas where the ground was softer. Below the prison buildings was a

complex drainage system that emptied into the Fleet. Middleton's plan and section drawing of the drainage system (Fig 9) show he intended the drains to be between 15 and 20 feet (4.5m to 6.1m) below ground level. The foundations for the perimeter wall (see Fig 14) were intended to be 6 feet 8 inches (2.06m) below ground level but again they may have exceed this depth if the ground conditions were unsuitable.

The extent and depth of the 19th century additions to the prison are not known but could reasonably be expected to be of a similar depth to the 18th century buildings.

The previous buildings would have had an impact upon any archaeological deposits by truncating the site, within the footprints of these structures, to a depth of between 2m and 6m, below the 19th century ground level.

4.2.1.4 Depth of archaeological deposit

Trial pits on the Phoenix Place site have shown that post-medieval dump deposits dating from the 18th century survive to a depth of more than 4.4m below ground level. Archaeological deposits were encountered in TP308 at approximately 0.8m below ground level. Archaeological deposits were recorded below modern rubble and concrete slab at 0.55m below present ground level in TP310.

4.2.2 Archaeological potential

The nature of possible archaeological survival in the area of the proposed development is summarised here, taking into account the levels of natural geology (see section 3.2 and relevant levels OD in section 3.4), the level and nature of later disturbance and truncation (see section 4.1) and the nature of archaeological deposits and features known from adjacent sites (see section 3.4).

The estimate of potential is made before the impact of the proposed development is taken into account, and is therefore valid for the whole site.

4.2.2.1 Prehistoric

Previous finds from the area indicate that there is low potential for *in situ* and redeposited Palaeolithic remains to be present on the site and a slightly higher potential for re-deposited Palaeolithic remains within the underlying gravel.

Although a single Mesolithic artefact has been found within the vicinity of the site there is a low potential for evidence of Mesolithic remains such as scatters of burnt pebbles and struck flints within any alluvial deposits.

The possible presence of alluvium on the western side of the site also means the site has a moderate potential for palaeoenvironmental evidence. Such deposits could contain plant and animal remains (e.g. diatoms, forams, pollen, snails, insects and seeds) and could provide further information about past environments.

Previous finds from the area indicate that there is also a low potential for encountering later prehistoric remains including Bronze Age and Iron Age cut features such as field boundary ditches.

Although prehistoric remains would be of local significance there is nothing to suggest that they may have either regional or national importance.

4.2.2.2 Roman

Isolated archaeological remains from the Roman period have been recorded in the immediate vicinity and might be expected on site but the site is considered to have a low potential for finds dating from the Roman period as the site is outside the Roman City and some way to the north of a Roman Road.

Although any remains dating from the Roman period would be of local significance there is nothing to suggest that they would have either regional or national importance.

4.2.2.3 Saxon

A few Saxon remains have been found to the southwest of the site, in the vicinity of the Farringdon Road, and there is a low potential that cut features dating from this period will be found on the eastern side of the site.

Although these remains are clearly of local significance there is nothing to suggest that they may have either regional or national importance.

4.2.2.4 Medieval

Archaeological remains from the medieval period have been recorded in the immediate vicinity and might be expected on site. There is cartographic and documentary evidence to suggest public laystall may have existed on the southwestern corner of the site during the late medieval period. There is a moderate potential for dump deposits to be present on the western half of the site. Excavation of a similar rubbish mound at Seward Street has shown that a significant depth of material may exist on the site.

Archaeological remains from the medieval period have been recorded in the immediate vicinity and might be expected on site.

4.2.2.5 Post-medieval–modern

Archaeological remains from the post-medieval–modern period have been recorded on the site. There is a high potential for encountering remains associated with the 18th and 19th century prison that is known to have existed on the site. During the excavation on the site in 1992 (Fig 24, Site 3) load bearing and internal walls, that appear to have been part of the original prison building, were recorded. Therefore there is a high potential for finding remains of the prison buildings across the site.

The walls found during the 1993 excavation were constructed on post-medieval dump layers. These dumps were found to be between 3.5 and 4m thick and were recorded at a height of 14.19m OD to 14.3m OD. Therefore there is a high potential for finding thick post-medieval dump deposits remains across the site.

There is a low potential for encountering garden remains and other remains such as such cesspits and wells, associated with the Sir John Oldcastle Tavern, smallpox hospital and later industrial activity. There is also the remote possibility that the prison gardens and the smallpox hospital gardens were used as burial grounds, although there is no documentary evidence to support this. Therefore there is a low potential for encountering post-medieval burials in this area of the site.