



THE CHURCHYARD OF ST BOTOLPH WITHOUT BISHOPSGATE  
FOUNTAIN REPAIR  
BISHOPSGATE  
London EC2

City of London

An archaeological watching brief report

April 2009



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Site code: SBT09  
National Grid Reference: 532717 182244

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## **Summary (non-technical)**

*This report has been commissioned by Julian Kverndal of the City of London in order to record and assess the results of a watching brief carried out at The Churchyard of St Botolph without Bishopsgate.*

*Subsidence of the western side of the fountain located in the south churchyard led to an exploratory trench being excavated to examine the foundations. This was monitored by a Museum of London Archaeology Senior Archaeologist on 18th March 2009. The subsidence was found to be the result of soft ground conditions beneath the heavy machinery which operates the fountain. The machinery is positioned under the western end of the fountain, causing an imbalance and sinkage on that side.*

*The soft ground conditions were probably caused by a combination of the presence of the backfilled medieval City ditch, which ran beneath the fountain, and the graveyard soil which had been regularly turned over during the use of the burial ground.*

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## **1 Introduction**

### **1.1 Site background**

The watching brief took place at the Churchyard of St Botolph without Bishopsgate, London EC2,, hereafter called 'the site'. The churchyard is located to the south and west of the church, bounded by Bishopsgate to the east, the church and church hall and Alderman's walk to the north, 69 Old Broad Street and the space around it (including a tennis court) to the west and buildings fronting onto Wormwood Street to the south (Fig 1). The fountain lies in the south churchyard area. The centre of the trench is at OS National Grid Reference 533188 181482. Modern ground level immediately adjacent to the site on Bishopsgate is 15.70m OD OD. The site code is SBT09.

### **1.2 Origin and scope of the report**

This report was commissioned by Julian Kverndal of the City of London and produced by Museum of London Archaeology (MOL Archaeology). The report has been prepared within the terms of the relevant Standard specified by the Institute for Archaeologists (IFA, 2001).

The purpose of the watching brief was to determine whether archaeological remains or features, with particular reference to burial vaults, were present on the site and if they were responsible for the subsidence of the west side of the fountain. If such features were present, the intention was also to record the nature and extent of such remains.

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

## **2 The watching brief**

### **2.1 Methodology**

All recording during the watching brief was done in accordance with the *Archaeological Site Manual* (MoLAS, 1994).

The fountain located in the south part of the churchyard was subsided on its west side (Fig 3). A plan and sections based on the original construction drawings (City of London drawing no. 233-08-AR-E(0)1) show the foundations to be composed of concrete, fabric and hardcore, with a deep pump pit beneath the west end. An exploratory trench was excavated adjacent to it to determine the cause of the subsidence and potentially to remedy it.

The trench was excavated by hand by the contractors, F. M. Conway, and monitored by a Senior Archaeologist from MOL Archaeology.

The site has produced one trench sheet and 9 digital photographs. No contexts were numbered and no artefacts were retrieved. A few disarticulated human bones were found in the trench but these were reburied.

The site record can be found under the site code SBT09 in the Museum of London archive.

### **2.2 Results of the watching brief**

One trench was excavated by the contractors measuring 2.75m north-south by 1.00m east-west. It was located directly to the west of the fountain (Fig 2).

Initially the entire area was deturfed, revealing a tiled cover to a pair of overflow pipes emerging from the fountain and running north-west, 300mm below ground level. These were retained in situ and it was decided to excavate to the south of them in a sondage 1.4m wide. The soil consisted of a fairly homogenous dark grey/black sandy silt with frequent gravel inclusions.

The resulting trench was 1.5m deep and showed that the concrete foundation to the main part of the fountain extended to 0.9m below ground level. However, the machinery which operates the fountain was housed in a block of concrete which was considerably deeper, extending down to 1.5m deep (Fig 4).

A small exploratory cut was dug beneath the shallow part of the foundation to determine whether it was deeper further to the west, or whether there was hardcore material beneath it, but this was found not to be the case.

### **3 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 with the Museum of London. A short note on the results of the watching brief should appear in the annual round up of the *London Archaeologist*.

### **4 Conclusions**

The fountain is situated over the backfilled medieval City ditch. It is also constructed in graveyard soil which was probably disturbed a number of times during the use of the burial ground. This combination has resulted in the ground being soft and evidently the weight of the fountain, in particular the pumping machinery, has caused subsidence.

No archaeological features were observed during the watching brief.

### **5 Acknowledgements**

The author would like to thank the following for their contributions and help in producing this report:

- Julian Kverndal of the City of London City Surveyor's Department for commissioning the project.
- The staff of F. M. Conway for providing the on-site services.

For Museum of London Archaeology the project was managed by Sophie Jackson.

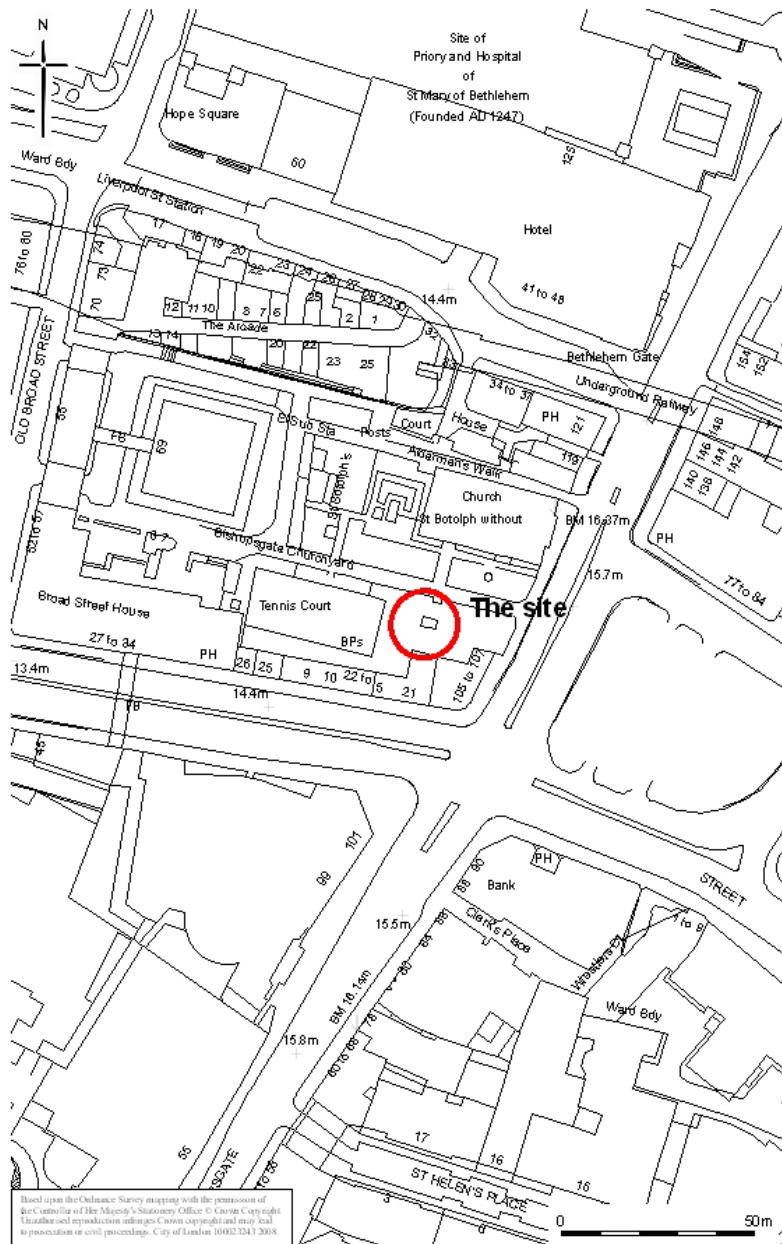


Fig 1 Site location



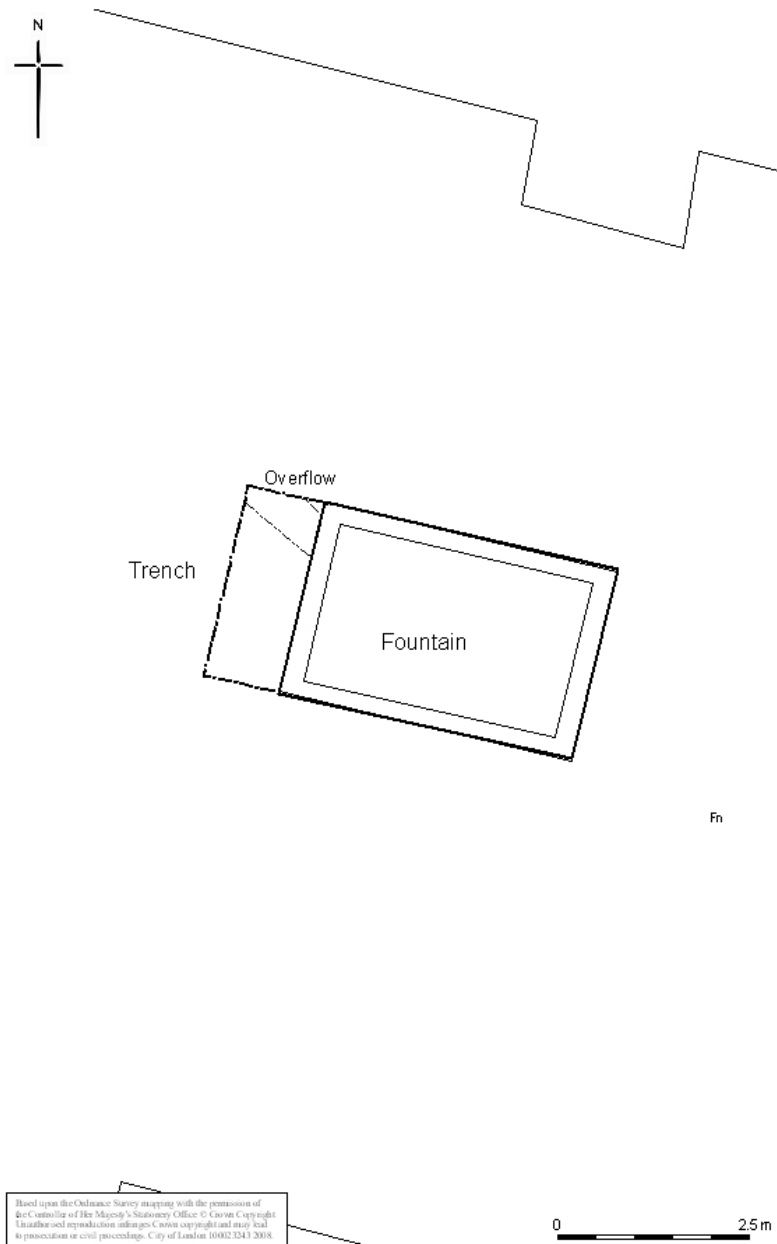


Fig 2 Trench plan



Fig 3 The fountain, looking south-west



Fig 4 The trench after excavation, east to top of photograph

## Appendix: OASIS form

**OASIS ID: molas1-57601**

### Project details

Project name	St Botolph without Bishopsgate churchyard, fountain repair
Short description of the project	Subsidence of the western side of the fountain located in the south churchyard led to an exploratory trench being excavated to examine the foundations. The subsidence was found to be the result of soft ground conditions beneath the heavy machinery which operates the fountain. The machinery is positioned under the western end of the fountain, causing an imbalance and sinkage on that side. The soft ground conditions were probably caused by a combination of the presence of the backfilled medieval City ditch, which ran beneath the fountain, and the graveyard soil which had been regularly turned over during the use of the burial ground. No archaeological deposits were recorded.
Project dates	Start: 18-03-2009 End: 19-03-2009
Previous/future work	No / No
Any associated project reference codes	SBT09 - Sitecode
Type of project	Recording project
Site status	Area of Archaeological Importance (AAI)
Current Land use	Other 4 - Churchyard
Investigation type	'Watching Brief'
Prompt	Direction from Local Planning Authority - PPG16

### Project location

Country	England
Site location	GREATER LONDON CITY OF LONDON CITY OF LONDON Churchyard of St Botolph without Bishopsgate, fountain

Postcode	EC2
Study area	510.00 Square metres
Site coordinates	TQ 33188 18148 50.9468002208 -0.103826323208 50 56 48 N 000 06 13 W Point

#### Project creators

Name of Organisation	MoL Archaeology
Project brief originator	City of London (formerly
Project design originator	MoL Archaeology
Project director/manager	Sophie Jackson
Project supervisor	Robin Wroe-Brown
Type of sponsor/funding body	Corporation of London

#### Project archives

Physical Archive Exists?	No
Digital Archive recipient	LAARC
Paper Archive recipient	LAARC

#### Project bibliography 1

Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
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Title	Churchyard of St Botolph without Bishopsgate fountain repair, Bishopsgate, London EC2
Author(s)/Editor(s)	Wroe-Brown, R.
Date	2009
Issuer or publisher	MoL Archaeology
Place of issue or publication	London
Description	A4 Client report

Entered by	Robin Wroe-Brown (rwroe-brown@museumoflondon.org.uk)
Entered on	31 March 2009