



The case of the
Roman wall in Noble
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Section1: Introduction

This paper addresses the question of whether a commercial modern building can be built close to a historic landscape. This is a subject of substantial controversy. This is because modern buildings can overshadow the historical buildings and diminish their importance of cultural heritage. Modern buildings are controversial, whether preservation, innovation, tradition and creation they bring to a city have effects on urban development or not. The question is if it is right to build new buildings on sites of historical buildings.

It is common in urban design today that modern buildings are built near sites of reliable cultural heritage to change the landscape. For instance, this can be appreciated in London today. However, this practice can minimise or even destroy the cultural meaning of the historical buildings. Modern buildings surrounding the Roman wall in Noble Street minimize it in the landscape and impede it to become a central cultural attraction for London This can be appreciated in figure 1.

As a result, Londoners, and the visiting public of this global city, do not pay attention to the Roman wall as a historic building because of the modern buildings. This phenomenon can be seen mostly in Noble Street as the general public not pay attention to the Roman wall. Because of the modern buildings near to the Roman wall, the negative effect of modern buildings on the Roman wall is in Noble Street (Figure2).

Noble Street has a unique potential to become a landmark for people in London and all over the world. This is because of the Roman wall is the oldest heritage in London which it is still visible in Noble Street. This part of the wall is also part of the medieval city wall of London too.

Surrounding the wall there are buildings of different periods of time. This is not a negative or positive feature in itself, but requires careful arrangements to bring harmony and correspondence between the buildings. Consequently, this paper will illuminate the historical development surrounding the Roman wall in Noble Street.

It also exposes the possibility of using other well-known London's landmarks as connectors to the wall, such as The Museum of London, St Anne and St Agnes church and the Barbican to show the wall in a better light. Also, the mentioned Landmarks follow the original line of the Roman wall which is hidden under their structures. To do this paper, will show that these landmarks that are of three different periods located in the vicinity, can be used to make the visitors pay more attention to the Roman wall when they visit their premises. Consequently, the aim of this paper is to call the attention that importance of preserving modern buildings need to be in harmony with historical buildings and not to intrude and impose their urban design, so the importance of historical building, are truly highlighted and preserved for future generations.



Figure 1: Street view of the facade of a modern building called One London wall. This building is besides the Roman wall in Noble Street, which is complete hidden by the modern structure. The Roman wall is on the left of the One London wall. (Photograph by Hammerson .n.a)



Figure 2: This photo shows the different height between the Roman wall and the modern buildings that surrounded it. The modern building in Noble Street are adjacent the Roman wall making it unperceivable and insignia flaunt (Photograph by Weall).

Section 2. The Roman wall in London and its importance throughout history until today

The Roman wall in London is one of the heritage where has a long history in London and the city of London also is the oldest part of the United Kingdom. For this reason, London and the Roman wall has a common area of reference for people. Also, Bradley & Pevsner states that

“Roman London is therefore one of the most thoroughly studied of all ancient cities” (Bradley & Pevsner.1999 p27)

Our knowledge of antiquity is about London originated from the finding of the first Roman town in A.D43. Additionally, in recent years, the City Wall is the unique subsistent structure and our knowledge of the Roman period at this time is based on all the surveys from archaeologists. All of the excavations of this legacy have taken place in the context of digging the foundation of new buildings (Bradley & Pevsner, 1999).

Regarding the structure of the Roman city of London Grimes (1947) pointed out that our knowledge of this period of time is very little. Bared on the discovery of very little remains such as a wall, a ditch, gate and fragment found on private and public buildings, see figure 3.

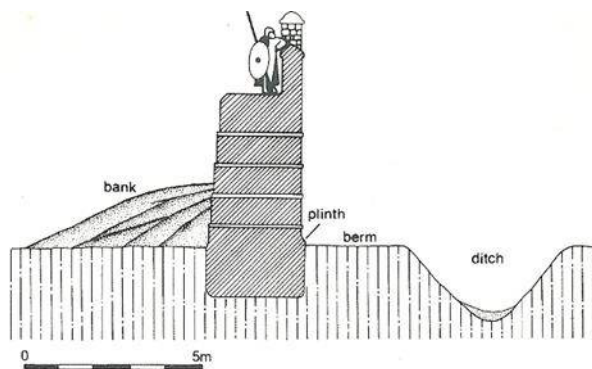


Figure 3: The defence of a city. A schematic cross-section of the defensive wall in early third-century which shows the contrast between a deep ditch on the outside of the wall and a bank at the inside of the wall as well. In relation to details of this wall, the form of it is rag stone rubble detached by four tiles courses, by a sandstone plinth at the foundation (Milne 1995).

Roman remains came to light during excavations for sewers between eighteenth and mid-nineteenth. The original Roman structure was found along the middle of the modern streets and it was clear that these was a Roman city, that had no obvious relationship to the contemporary street plan (Merrifield ,1965). The understanding of the original plan of the Roman city wall allow us to find the common lined shared between the Roman wall and contemporary urban street plan to show the Roman wall in a better light .(figure4)

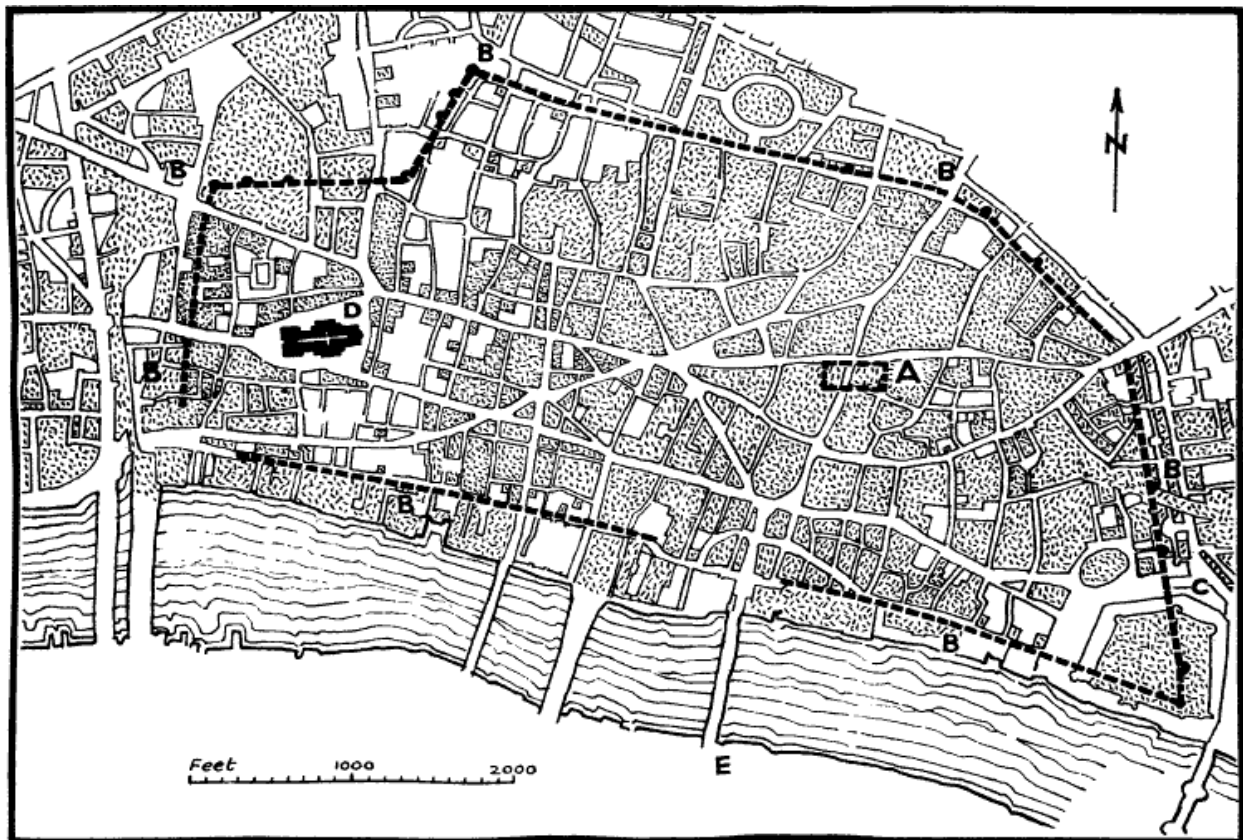


Figure4: This is a plan of Roman London found in the London museum. It is possible to see the divested area. The highlighted in bold shows the Roman wall clearly. It also shows: A: Plan of the Roman Basilica and now is under Leaden hall market. B: plan of medieval Roman city wall. C: the town of London .D: St Paul's basilica E: London bridge. (Grimes 1947)

The main material used for the construction of the Roman wall was Kentish rag stone which is similar to a contemporary concrete wall with rubble aggregate. Moreover, the structure of this

wall has based on timber foundations (Merrifield, 1965). Milne's (1995) explanations show that the construction of the Roman wall was designed for defence by reason of that edifice of the sheer bulk is 2.7m (9ft) thick at the base and 6m (20ft) high. This wall was a costly construction walls it had 3 km (2 mile) long, and was built it between A.D. 190 and A.D. 220. Even so, the Roman wall displays the terrain expansion of the urban area in this period of time (Milne, 1995). In addition, archaeological studies and the topography plan of the site in the city of London show that the initial Roman ground level lies eighteen feet below the contemporary road level (Merrifield, 1965).

According to urban design, this shows the important role of the wall in the city. For the first urban settlement, the construction of a wall shows the extraordinary conditions of urban life, which required the control of spaces by the particular power relationships that required the city. Also, the wall has this kind of structure that not only can invasion of the enemy, but also can direct the movement of people and shape the public space (Fontana-Giusti, 2011).

Fontana-Giusti (2011, p312) also states that walls are not only just a piece of structure, but also is an element which forms of architecture. This explanation exhibits the connection between the wall and city, meanwhile, shows that walls in early city can play an important role in urban design. Furthermore, the wall is not only a piece of structure to protect the city, but also can show the distinctive part of design.

Section 3- How to make the Roman wall a land mark for London and using three nearby land marks

3.1: Using the Barbican

The Roman wall in Noble Street has a special condition. because this wall is one of the last remaining examples of a Second World War bomb site within the Metropolitan area(Matthews,

2008). The Roman wall and the Barbican are common areas of reference for people. During world war two, most parts of The Roman wall was damaged and the site of the Barbican was demolished by German military. The site of the Barbican was rebuilt after world war two with modern buildings close to the Roman wall.

In the original plan of the Roman wall in Londinium times, Noble Street and the Barbican wear connected. This is important because this physical connection links there two sites (the Roman wall and the Barbican) that are two different periods, but share a similar horizontal line.(see figure 7)

This magnificent linking of the ancient plan with modernity can be seen by the surviving examples of the ancient London wall in the Barbican plan, making it a fascinating link with the past (Marsh, 2009). (This can be seen in figure 8) However, the link between the Barbican (as a modern structure) with the Roman wall in Noble street (as a oldest part of London) can highlight both the ancient past and modernism of the post war buildings in the same urban context.

Modernism probably started around in the 1930s in London, which has a special meaning in the history of England. The external political and economic world and transferred the emergence to the structure and design of buildings in Britain (Powers, 2007).

Following the end of the World War two, the new emerging challenge was whether architect should keep the evolution of the 1930s or should pay more attention to satisfy the requirements of humanistic architecture. Indeed, it is inevitable to compare both of that (Bullock, 2002).Between 1940 and 1945, a third of London was demolished by German military, and this bombardment included parts of the Roman wall as well. As a result, archaeologists lost the opportunity to excavate for the knowledge of Roman time. Also, one of the most all-embracing parts of damage lay in the western part of London which runs from the Barbican to the

Cheapside, over from the remains of the Roman wall, in Noble Street to and thereafter to the Thames River in London (Merrifield 1965).

After world war two plenty of buildings were destroyed in the west part of London and especially in One London Street. Rebuilding of this part was necessary. After the world war two One London Street became one of the well-known areas in London with the Barbican is a mega structure. In addition, one of the modern buildings experienced from in the late 1960s to in the early 1970s to be completed. The Barbican is a historical site to the information of pre and post war attempts to modernism London. Chamberlin, Powell and Bon designed grand structures, which covered 2,104 units made of 140 linking flat types. Likewise, this area has three high-rise 400ft towers and it is surrounded by 13 residential buildings this building which has various open and green space's creations (AJ Buildings, Library 2012a). This structure was designed by concrete which contrasts the water in the landscape and the concrete of the facade of this building. The Barbican has complex and different structures such as cinemas, schools, and theatres and residential areas. The combination of cultural, educational and residential is included in use of different buildings of one grand structure. Due to this building is significant for post war British architecture, the Barbican is an uncommon structure. Thus, on the one hand Barbican need created a new idea about the concept of living environment in Britain, on the other hand, it is need to use high technology in materials and the detail of the plan in this period. This places the Barbican as an important landmark next to the Roman wall. However, the concept of the building is not only present in the English lifestyle, but also shows the common concept between European and American as well. The Barbican presents the novel idea about the new British lifestyle. This structure describes as a wealthy society and it is the desire toward of luxury life form a European and English perspective (Heathcote, 2010).

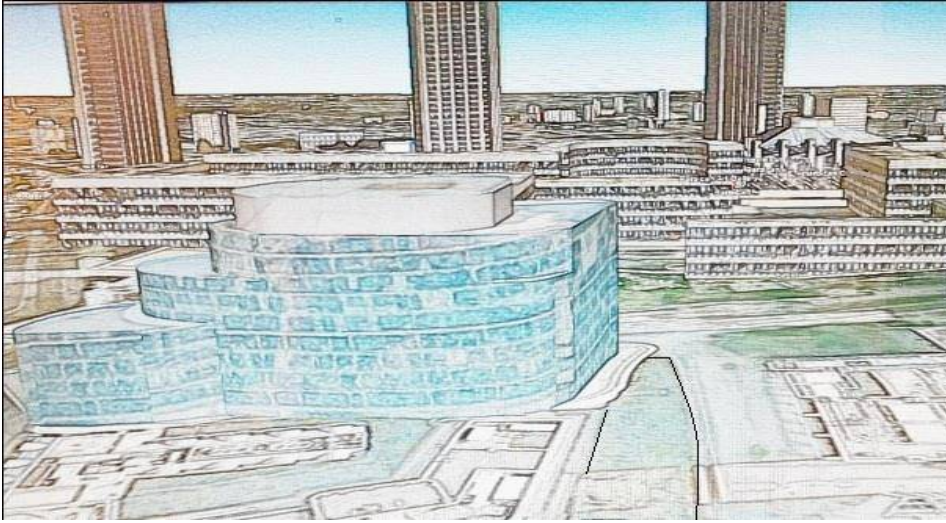


Figure 5: perspective of the site to show the connection between (One London wall) and Noble Street to the Barbican (Photograph by the Author using Google Sketch up).



Figure 6: view of the Barbican and the One London wall and Noble Street, which show the relationship between them (Photograph by the Author using Google Sketch up).

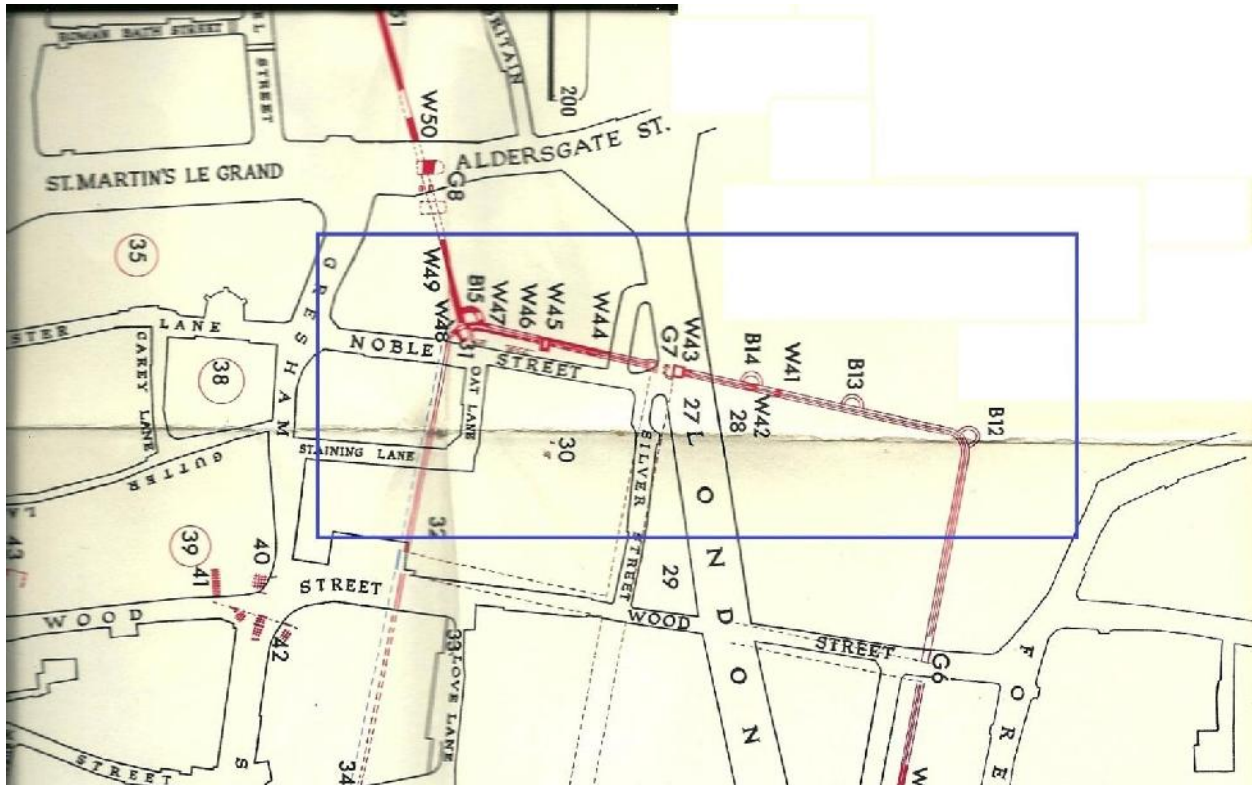


Figure 7: Details of the ancient the line of Roman wall are shown inside the blue rectangle the line of the Roman wall is shown in red, showing connection line of the Roman wall in Noble Street to the Barbican .In addition, in this plan 'w 'is mentions to the relation of wall to the city wall .and 'B 'is mentions to the relation to the bastions of the wall. (Extract of Merrifield 1965 with my adaptations)



Figure 8: Defensive area of Roman wall in the Barbican. This photo shows that the modern building allow the ancient structure to show off and not to be minimised by modernisms (Photograph by Brown).

3.2. Using the Museum of London

After world war two architects Powell and Moya designed one of the famous and significant buildings in London: the London Museum. This building is an example of modernism, which creates a compare between the modern movement in London and the Roman, because of the fact that the building is built in one of the largest sites of urban history in the world. This building opened on 2nd December 1976, it was the first new post-war museum in London. Furthermore, the superstructure of this building, seen from the street is a great brick round bastion, whose circular forms of bricks continue from the front court to the entry. Moreover, the museum galleries are built surrounding numerous great Roman historical objects found on site, and also direct one's gaze towards the London Roman Walls (AJ Buildings Library, 2012b).

3.3. Using the St Anna and St Agnes Church

St. Anne and St. Agnes church are other constructions near the Roman wall in Noble Street, which is significant in this urban context. By the reason of the fact that the church was exactly built near the Roman Wall in Nobel Street, this site offers a different period of time in this urban design. This church was built, and redesigned many times in history and today it there per shows different layers of exterior and interior designs. This site offers contrast of different periods of time too. In addition, the church was founded by two sisters and dedicated it to ST. Anne and St. Agnes at 1137. Yet, in 1548 it was damaged seriously, and then rebuilt, after that almost of that demolished by the great fire of London, and once more reconstructed by Sir Christopher Wren (Tabor, 1917). While, after the Second World War this building was destroyed mainly again and in 1966 this building was regarded to have been as Christopher Wren's designs. Nevertheless, this building is famous forma musical point of view. In Middleton and Hatts's (2003) book, they asserts that the well-known Christian worship service Bach Vespers (songs and ancient hymns of two years cycle made by Bach) can only be heard regularly in only

in three places in the world, first at New York in, United States of America the next is Leipzig in Germany, and then this church. This kind of unique potential of the church not only can highlight the church as a unique area for Christianity but also can show the Roman wall in the Noble Street in a better light.

Commenting about the material used in this church before world war two, Tabors, (1917) insisted that the facade of St. Anne and St. Agnes had a red brick forepart, covered with stucco. Regarding the structure, the author says that, the small pillar of the ecclesiastical was designed with lanterns and a weathervane in the form of the letter A. It is clearly shown that this ecclesiastical was redesigned in 1917, in this urban context. Additionally, the main point of this church is that its form was redesigned with the same exterior design of the pre-world war design. Therefore this makes the church an important landmark as it still preserves its pre-world war design and therefore brings its historical importance from its past to the present without interference from other periods of time. The combination between Roman Wall and this Middle Age structure can put Noble Street as one of the significant streets in London today (see Figure9).The church therefore can be used to direct the gaze towards the Roman London wall as the remains of the wall are really close by. This can be appreciated in figure10.



Figure9. St Anne and St Agnes, City of London, depicted 1814 by Artist: Joseph Skelton'(Photograph by City of London / Heritage-Images.2009)



Figure10: connection of line of Roman wall to the St Anne and St Agnes in Noble Street (Photograph by Bywaysbyrailway.2011)

Section 4: The effects of One London Wall on the Roman wall in Noble Street.

During the 19century and the 20century Noble Street changed dramatically. These changes of urban context in landscape changed the perspective of the Roman wall, as the Roman wall became minimized by the surrounding modern buildings. For this reason, understanding the

history of the Noble Street can help to highlight the historic changes as a unique phenomenon in 21 century. Standing on a historical point of views, Noble Street can be understood clearly. Bradley and Pevsner (1999) point out that, Noble Street stretches to the Nearby Entries of the Roman wall .The Roman wall in Noble Street is on the continuing line of Foster lane N of Gresham street.(see figure 16) In 1322, Thomas Le Noble (to whom Noble Street took its name) held properties here, In addition, In the Middle Ages, Noble Street was known as Foster lane. After the world war two the W sides of Noble Street was empty. However the S side end which it is currently already St Anna and St Agnes church existed and excavations of 1950 showed that the Roman wall in Noble street had two previous Roman constructions, The early structure was built on c.A.D.100 and the second was built on c.A.D. 200 Consequently, these two structures were integrated and displayed together as only one. (Bradley & Pevsner .1999)

However, One London Wall is a controversial building, It was built in 2004 by Norman Foster .This 13-storey structure offers 18,500 m² of office dwelling in Noble Street (Hammerson, 2007). This building was built close near the Roman Wall and it is opposite to the London museum. This can be seen in figure 11.

The One London Wall has a debateable situation in this urban context. On the grounds that the shape of this building hide the Roman wall (see figure 18), the different layer of topography between the Modern Street and the Roman wall minimized the Roman period of street view of the One London Wall Street (see figure 13) Therefore it is possible to change this. The Noble Street and the modern buildings surrounding this Street can play a better role in urban design. due to the fact that Noble Street can show diverse layers of history in one street and the harmonic combination of old and new. In addition, this characteristic can show an interesting and continuous contrast between other periods of importance such as the pre-war, the post-war, the modern and the Roman structures. Consequently, contemporary modern buildings can help to mark their own destiny by making themselves harmonious with the part. Modern architecture

can reflect an independent political strategy (Tafari, 1976). In terms of the cultural legacy, the efforts to protect heritage rights on national governments, they are the entity that protect the important heritage structure and site plans of historical urban context since the time of Theodoric the Great (Viceroy of the Eastern Roman Empire)(493-525AD) However , In the twenty and the twenty first century's the cultural heritage protection still depends on national states. However, this protection is changing today as globalization introduces the concept of global heritage. This kind of national value of heritage for different nations are therefore changing as a new concept of global heritage for all of the countries is emerging this globally concept is created by the rise of a flow of international standards that show the importance of a site in an area as a global heritage.(Logan, 2001)



Figure 11: Connection between the Museum of London and the Barbican and the One London wall (Photograph by Newman).

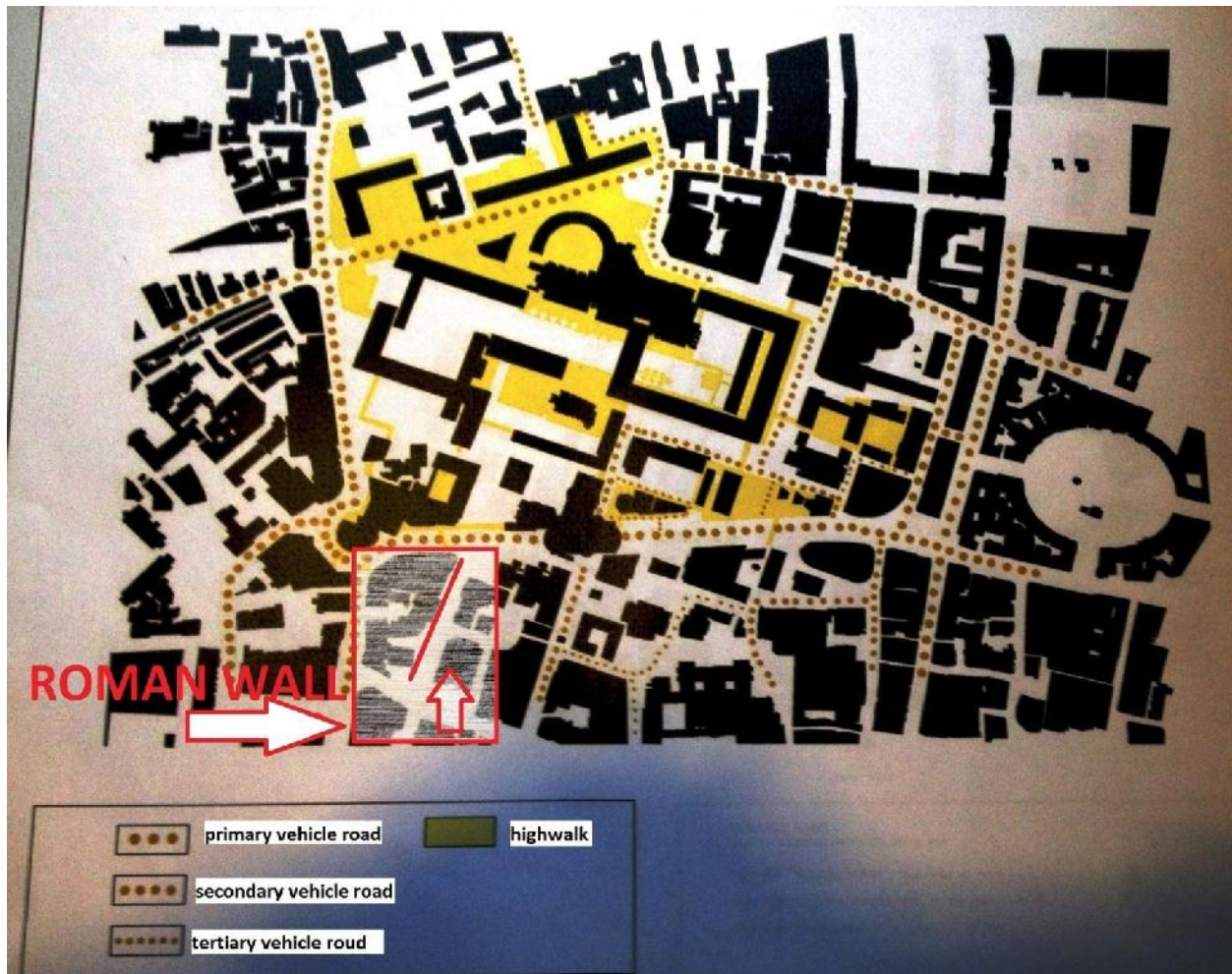


Figure 12: site plan and access of vehicle and people to Roman wall and different aria near to Noble Street .(Photograph by the Author)



Figure 13: The Roman wall and contrast between different layer of topography between the One London wall and the Hsbc bank building near to this heritage. (Photograph by the Author)



Figure 14: photo shows the distance between Norman Foster building to the Roman wall. (Photograph by the Author)



Figure15: Privet access of the One London wall to the Roman wall with bridge and built a new classical structure on top of the Roman wall. (Photograph by the Author)

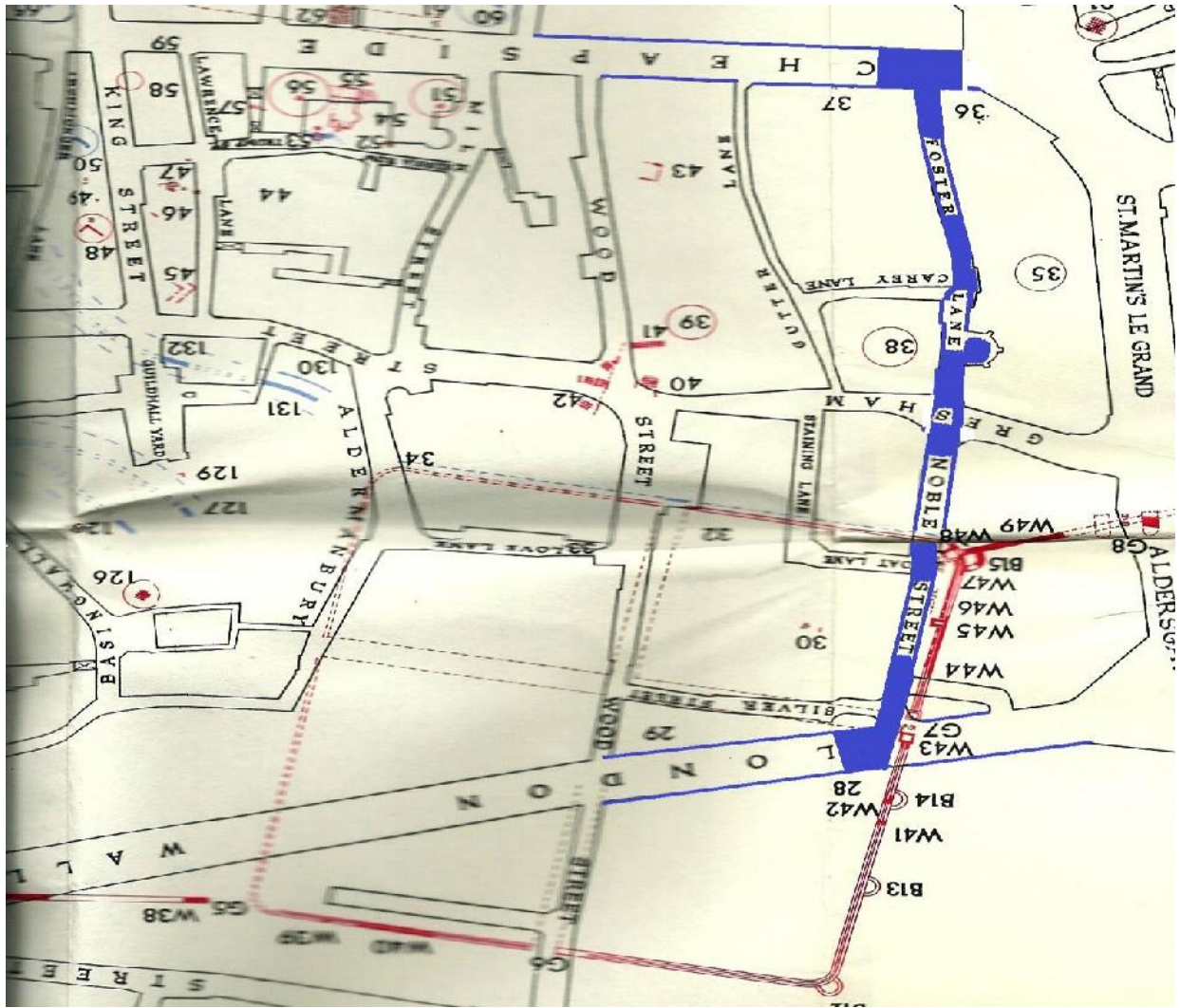


Figure 16: The Blue hatch shows the way of connection between the London Wall Street and the Cheapside Street. the red line shows existing part of the Roman wall in this plan .However, the blue line shows that the line of the Roman wall in Noble street runs parallel to the blue hatch between Cheapside street and London wall street. This connection shows that Foster lane and Noble Street can be used as a unique connection between two main streets and the potential of this two street can be used for change the way of movement this plan shows that the Roman wall in Noble street can be portrairt in better light as a historical structure and can play the role as a sign of connection between the London wall street and the Cheapside street . (Extract of Merrifield 1965 with my adaptations)



Figure17: Distance between the Roman wall and the HSBC building (approximately two metre)
(Photograph by Matthews 2008)

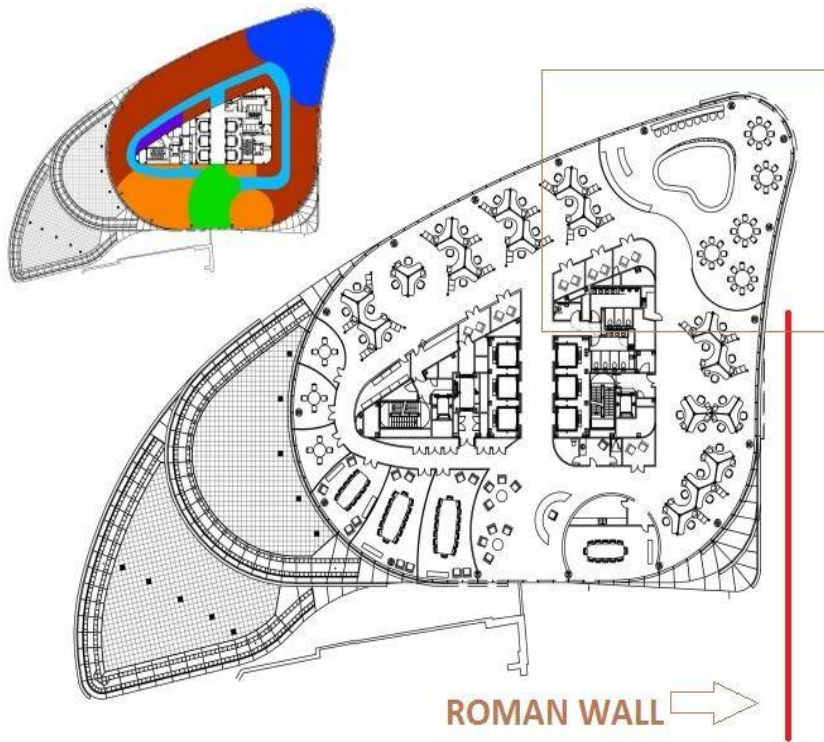


Figure 18: Floor Plan of One London Wall .with the arc of the building hiding the Roman structure for street view (Extract of coroflot with my adaptations)¹

This research is an attempt to fill in a gap in the literature the academic sources that, relate to the Roman wall in Noble Street do not mention it as a landmark of urban design but as an object of historical importance. In the literature none address the interaction of the Roman wall with modern culture but only as a relic of the past. It is interesting to note that in the source that relate to the Roman wall in Noble Street (Norman Foster), all references to the work has disappeared .In Norman Foster website there is no mention to his work on this area (www.fosterandpartners.com) make any comment. Instead, he advised me to look at other website which interestingly, did not mention his involvement in the construction of One London wall.

¹ -this company as an interior designer of One London wall doesn't respond of reference of floor plan photo.

Section5: Conclusion

Historical constructions in terms of conservation of the heritage in Britain are continuously necessary in urban design. This study addressed the care of the Roman Wall as a one of the prototypic wall and special structure in London. However, the modern movement in Noble Street did not respect the Roman wall as cultural heritage. The contrast of this structure between old and new does not attract people to visit this structure in London today. For this reason re-establish the London Roman wall as a major cultural level mark for modern London is vital. Yet, it would be drawing a conclusion that a definite level of modernism and modern building has been constantly essential. The greatest process of achievement could be to keep the equilibrium between the demand of the historical monument on the one hand, and modernism and new structures on the other hand.

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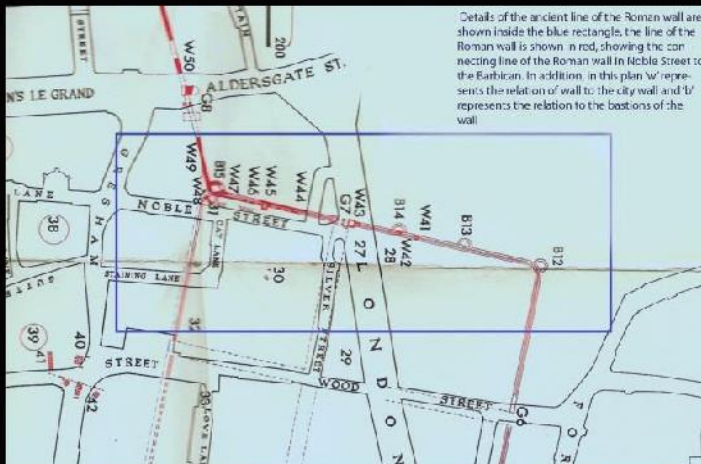
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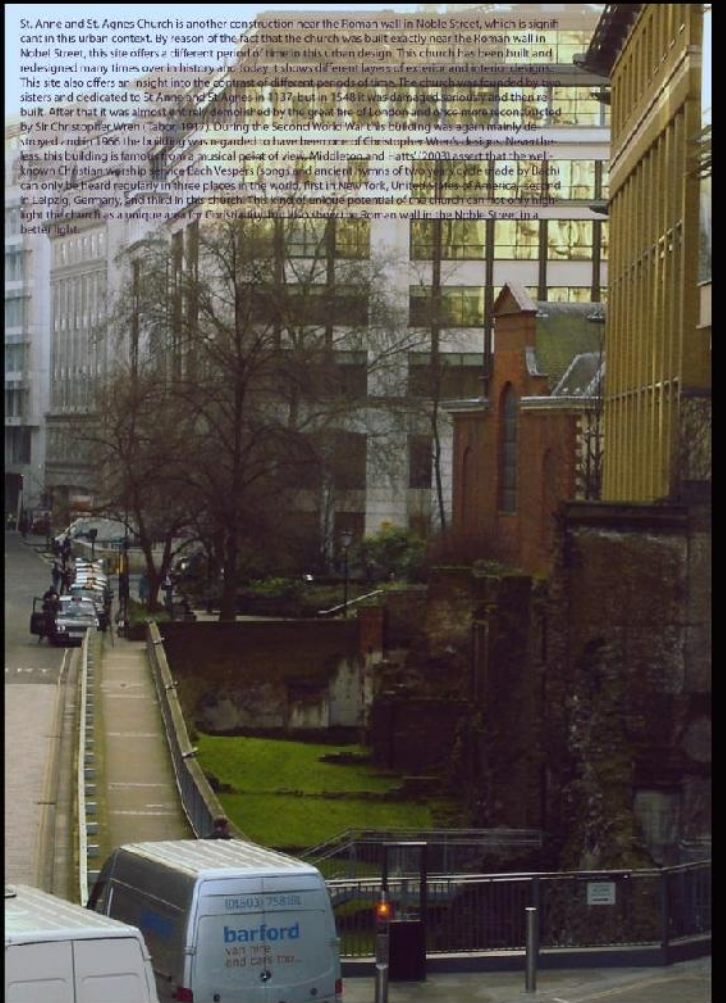
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Design project

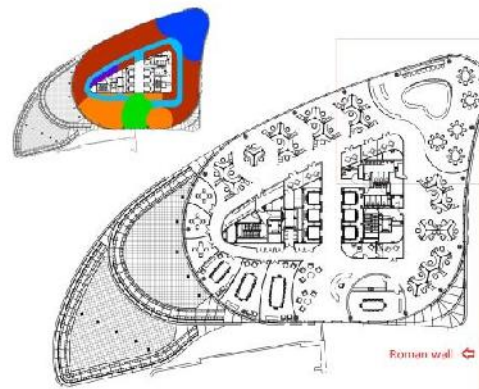


St. Anne and St. Agnes Church is another construction near the Roman wall in Noble Street, which is significant in the urban context. By reason of the fact that the church was built exactly near the Roman wall in Noble Street, this site offers a different period of time in this urban design. This church has been built and redesigned many times over its history and today it shows all these layers of exterior and interior designs. This site also offers an insight into the contrast of different periods of time. The church was founded by nuns and dedicated to St. Anne and St. Agnes in 1137, but in 1548 it was damaged seriously and then rebuilt. After that it was almost entirely demolished by the great fire of London and a new one was constructed by Sir Christopher Wren in 1691. During the Second World War, this building was again mainly destroyed. In 1966, after a planning survey conducted in the basement of Christopher Wren's design. Nevertheless, this building is famous for its musical point of view. Middleton and Watts (2003) assert that the well-known Christian worship service Each Vespers (songs and ancient hymns of two years cycle made by Barbi) can only be heard regularly in three places in the world: first in New York, United States of America, second in Leipzig, Germany, and third in this church. The kind of unique potential of the church can not only highlight this church as a unique asset for the urban design, but also connect the Roman wall in the Noble Street in a better light.





The blue hatch shows the connection between London Wall Street and Cheapside Street. The red line shows the existing part of the Roman wall in this plan. However, the blue line shows that the line of the Roman wall in Noble Street runs parallel to the blue hatch between Cheapside Street and London Wall Street. This connection shows that Foster Lane and Noble Street can be used as a unique connection between two main streets and this could potentially change the way of movement. This plan shows that the Roman wall in Noble Street can be portrayed in a better light as a historical structure and can play the role of a sign of connection between London Wall Street and Cheapside Street



Floor plan of One London Wall with the arc of the building hiding the Roman structure from street view







