

DOCUMENT VERIFICATION

KING'S CROSS CAB ROAD
LONDON BOROUGH OF CAMDEN

WATCHING BRIEF

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**An Archaeological Watching Brief Of A Geotechnical Investigation at
King's Cross Cab Road, London Borough of Camden**

Site Code: KCE 06

Central National Grid Reference: TQ 3032 8310

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1 ABSTRACT

- 1.1 This report details the results of an archaeological watching brief undertaken by Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited at King's Cross Cab Road, King's Cross, London Borough of Camden. The central National Grid Reference for the site is TQ 3032 8310. The watching brief was undertaken between 4th July 2006 and 4th August 2006 and was commissioned by White Young Green.
- 1.2 The watching brief monitored a geotechnical investigation being conducted to investigate ground conditions and foundation structures. Five trial pits were dug during the course of the work.
- 1.3 The watching brief revealed alluvial clay overlain by made ground and 19th century structural remains associated with King's Cross Station.

2 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 An archaeological watching brief was conducted by Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd on the site of King's Cross Cab Road, King's Cross, London Borough of Camden (Figure 1). The watching brief was conducted between 4th July 2006 and 4th August 2006 and was commissioned by White Young Green.
- 2.2 The watching brief monitored the excavation by hand and machine of five trial pits to investigate underlying foundations and ground conditions. The original method statement for the work (Mayo 2006) proposed two trial pits and a possible third. However, an extra two trial pits were added to the schedule of works during the course of the investigation. These were all located on Platform 1 and the Cab Road at the west side of King's Cross Station (see Figures 1 and 2).
- 2.3 The watching brief was project managed for Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd. by Chris Mayo and was conducted by Michael Bazley.
- 2.4 The completed archive comprising written, drawn and photographic records will eventually be deposited with the London Archaeological Archive Resource Centre (LAARC) under the site code KCE 06.

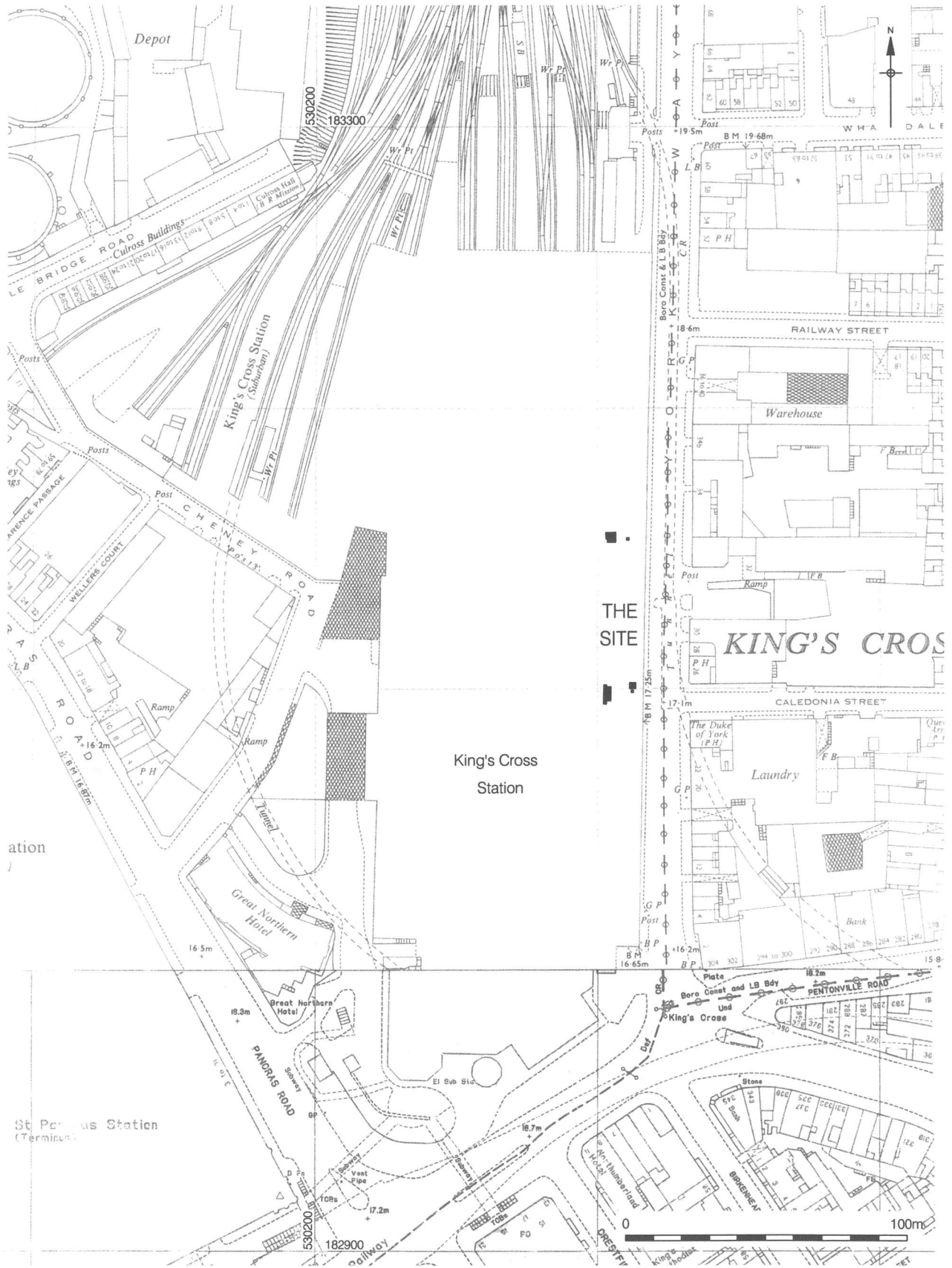


Figure 1
Site Location
1:2,000

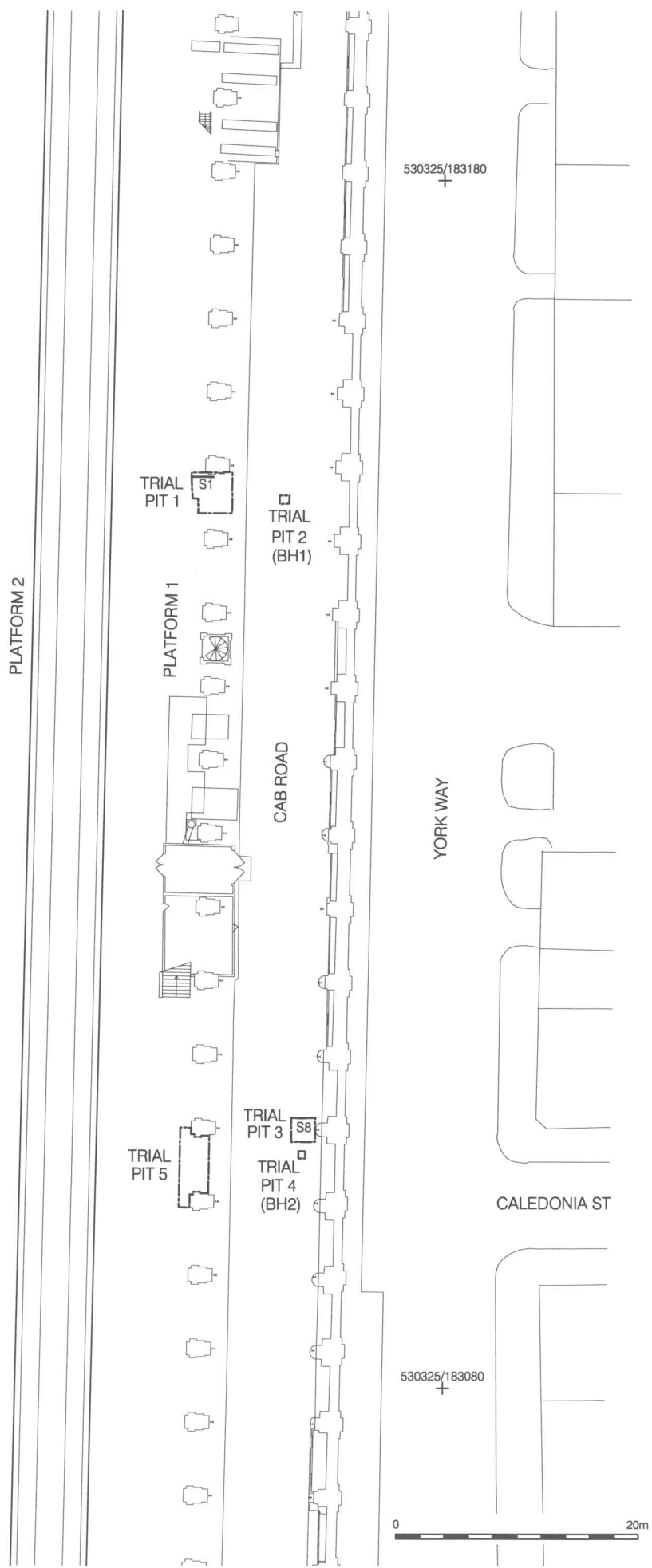


Figure 2
Trial Pit Locations
1:500

3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Little is known of the prehistoric potential of the area, but the position of the site near to the River Fleet has raised the possibility of prehistoric activity (Clough 2003).
- 3.2 The line of York Way, immediately to the east of the site, follows the conjectured route of a Roman road (GLSMR 080540). The site is approximately 200m to the north of the route of the River Fleet, a tributary of the Thames known to have attracted settlement during the Roman period (Gifford and Partners 2003). Findspots of this period are dotted across the area around the site.
- 3.3 The site has some potential for Saxon activity. It is possible that St Pancras Old Church on the west side of King's Cross Station has Saxon origins (Clough 2003).
- 3.4 In the early medieval period the area was both wooded and farmed, but flooding of the River Fleet in 1331 led to abandonment of village that had developed at St Pancras (Clough 2003). The route of a medieval road runs approximately 100m to the south of the site. This route has been conjectured to 'cross' the line of the Roman Road at the junction of York Way, Euston Road and Pentonville Road just to the south of the site (Gifford and Partners 2003).
- 3.5 Structural development of the site's area can be attested from the 18th and 19th centuries; previously much of the area was open land. Regent's Canal, to the north of the site, was constructed in 1820 (Clough 2003). King's Cross Station itself was first built in the middle of the 19th century.

4 ARCHAEOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY

- 4.1 The original method statement for the work (Mayo 2006) proposed two trial pits and a possible third. However, an extra two trial pits were added to the schedule of works during the course of the investigation. These were all located on Platform 1 and the Cab Road at the west side of King's Cross Station (see Figures 1 and 2). In all trenches the concrete slab or paving stones were broken and removed by contractors. This, and the removal of all underlying material, was monitored by an archaeologist.
- 4.2 Trial Pits 1, 3 and 5 were large trenches to enable safe access for engineer inspection (dimensions provided in Chapter 5). Trial Pits 2 and 4 were smaller starter pits for two boreholes which were part of the geotechnical brief, but not the archaeological watching brief. Borehole 1 was drilled in Trial Pit 2; Borehole 2 was drilled in Trial Pit 4.
- 4.3 The trial pits were recorded in plan at 1:20 and in section at 1:10. Remains and deposits were recorded on *pro forma* context sheets. The location of the trial pits was also recorded.
- 4.4 The levels used in this report are based upon those provided by White Young Green at ground level. These are 16.40m OD at TP 2 / BH1, and 16.27m OD at TP 4 / BH 2.

5 ARCHAEOLOGICAL DISCUSSION

5.1 Test Pit 1 (See Figures 2 and 3)

- 5.1.1 Test Pit 1 was located on Platform 1, 6.45m east of the station edge. It formed an approximate square, measuring 3.40m east-west by 3.38m north-south, and was excavated to various depths according to the remains within it, reaching a maximum of 2.45m along its eastern side.
- 5.1.2 The earliest deposit discovered in the trench was a hard stony lime concrete [15] at a height of 13.95m OD, observed along the eastern side of the trench. This acted as a foundation slab for several structural formations, all of a single construction phase, relating to the platform and station building.
- 5.1.3 First, a brick wall [5] aligned north-south formed the eastern edge of the trench. It had a double-stepped footing built upon slab [15], and ascended to a maximum height of 16.25m OD. It continued beyond the southern limit of the trench, as did an arched opening incorporated into its fabric, presumably for structural reasons. The apex of this arch was at a height of 15.5m OD. The span of the arch extended 1.20m north of the southern limit of excavation, and may continue further beyond the vertical limit of excavation at 0.35m beneath the apex, at which level it is not at its greatest extent. This structure is aligned with the western edge of the cab road, and may form a retaining wall against the road make-up beyond.
- 5.1.4 To the west of this first wall, and running parallel to it, was a more complex structural formation that has been divided into several contexts for ease of description. Essentially it comprised a large foundation wall [3], 0.38m wide, at a maximum height of 16.14m OD, and aligned north-south, running the length of the trench. On its eastern side was an inverted (U-shaped) arch [12], built flush against the wall in the manner of a blind arcade. It measured 0.20m east-west, was 3.10m across its span to the limit of excavation (although it continued southwards beyond this), and its apex was at a height of 15.40m OD. It exactly mirrored an arch in the station ceiling structure directly above, and was connected to it via a pillar flush with and extending beyond the northern limit of the trench. Beneath the apex, a stepped footing extended a further 0.30m eastwards, comprising four steps built upon concrete slab [15]. At the northern end of the trench, beneath the pillar and acting as its foundation, the footing turned eastwards to connect with wall [5]. The pillar appears to act as a nodal point, tying the north-south aligned foundation [3] and its blind arch [12] into the retaining wall [5] running parallel, and to the roof structure above.

5.1.5 Extending westwards from wall [3], and recorded as part of it, were two further walls, both incorporating arched openings, and both aligned east-west. The first of these walls (see Figure 3) ran along the northern edge of the trench at a maximum height of 16.11m OD. It measured 2.10m from the western face of the foundation wall to the western limit of excavation, beyond which it continued. The open structural arch incorporated within the wall also continued beyond this limit, and was 1.10m wide within the trench. Its apex was at a height of 15.69m OD. The second wall, 1.82m south of the first, measured 0.22m north-south and 1.56m from the west face of the foundation wall to the western limit of excavation, beyond which it continued. It was at a maximum height of 16.1m OD, and the open structural arch incorporated within it had its apex at a height of 15.67m OD and was 1.10m wide at the limit of excavation 0.22m below this, at which point it had not reached its greatest extent. These walls act as supports for the platform surface.

5.1.6 Overlying the footings of structures [12] and [5] in the east side of the trench was a mid grey brown silty clay [13], the first of two backfill deposits. It was at maximum height of 14.10m OD, was 0.34m thick and contained frequently occurring brick fragments. Overlying this was a brown clayey silt [6] observed across the entire trench, at a maximum height of 15.60m OD and a maximum of 1.60m thick. This contained shell flecks and 19th century pottery fragments. These deposits probably represent original backfilling around the foundations during the initial construction of the station.

5.1.7 Overlying these deposits and filling the spaces created by damage to the foundation walls was a sandy backfill [1] (also recorded as [2] and [4]), at a maximum height of 16.23m OD and with a maximum thickness of 0.80m. This contained much material dating to the 20th century, and was probably intended as make-up for the modern concrete platform surface. This surface was at a height of 16.40m OD, with a maximum thickness of 0.25m. In some places it was poured around York stone fragments, which may be a remnant of the original platform surface.

5.2 Test Pit 2 (See Figure 2)

5.2.1 Test Pit 2 was located 4m to the east of Test Pit 1, in the middle of the cab road, and measured 0.80m east-west by 0.72m north-south. It was excavated to a depth of 1.20m in preparation for a core sample, Borehole 1.

5.2.2 The earliest deposit in this trench was an orangey brown gravelly clay [10] at a height of 15.33m OD and with a thickness of 0.13m to the vertical limit of excavation, beyond which it continued. This was overlain by a layer of dark brown sandy silt [9] at

a height of 16.65m OD and 0.32m thick, containing CBM and mortar flecks. This underlay a layer of dark clayey silt [8] at a height of 15.78m OD and 0.13m thick, containing occasional 19th century potsherds. Overlying this was a layer of indurated silty sand [7] at a height of 16.20m OD and 0.42m thick. This layer contained large fragments of brick and included a single, rough course of bricks at its top. This provided the make-up for a 0.03m thick layer of asphalt [11] at a height of 16.22m OD. This may be a remnant of the original 19th century road surface, laid upon four separate ground-making dumps.

5.2.3 Overlying this surface was a layer of modern hoggin at a height of 16.30m OD and 0.08m thick. This formed make-up for the modern concrete road surface 0.10m thick at a height of 16.40m OD.

5.3 Test Pit 3 (See Figures 2 & 3)

5.3.1 Test Pit 3 was located directly south of Test Pit 2, again in the middle of the cab road. It measured 2.00m east-west by 2.00m north-south, and was excavated to a depth of 3.00m.

5.3.2 The earliest deposit in this trench was a dark brown clay [20] at a height of 13.77m OD, and 0.50m thick to the vertical limit of excavation, beyond which it continues. This is natural alluvial clay.

5.3.3 Overlying this was a layer of orangey brown gravelly clay [19] at a height of 14.57m OD, and 0.80m thick. This may be the same as [10] in Test Pit 2. It was overlain by a layer of dark clayey silt [18] at a height of 15.76m OD and 1.18m thick, containing occasional 19th century potsherds. This may be the same as [8] in Test Pit 2. It was overlain by a layer of indurated silty sand [17] at a height of 15.95m OD, and 0.20m thick. This layer contained large fragments of brick and is the same as [7] in Test Pit 2. Again, it provided the make-up for a 0.03m thick layer of asphalt [16] at a height of 15.97m OD, the probable remnant of a 19th century road surface.

5.3.4 These deposits were overlain by a layer of hoggin at a height of 16.17m OD and 0.20m thick, and sealed by the present road surface, a layer of concrete at a height of 16.27m OD and 0.10m thick.

5.4 Test Pit 4 (See Figure 2)

5.4.1 Test Pit 4 was located 0.72m directly south of Test Pit 3 in the cab road. It measured 0.60 east-west by 0.66m north-south, and was excavated to a depth of 1.20m.

5.4.2 The earliest deposit observed in this trench was an orange brown clayey silt at a height of 15.67m OD and 0.60m thick to the limit of excavation, beyond which it continued. It is probably the same as [8] and [18] in Test Pits 2 and 3 respectively. Overlying this was an indurated layer of silty sand [22] at a height of 15.94m OD and 0.27m thick. This is probably the same as [7] and [17] in Test Pits 2 and 3 respectively. Once more, it was overlain by a layer of asphalt [21] at a height of 15.97m OD and 0.03m thick.

5.4.3 These deposits were overlain by a layer of hoggin at a height of 16.19m OD and 0.22m thick, and sealed by the present road surface, a layer of concrete at a height of 16.27m OD and 0.08m thick.

5.5 Test Pit 5 (See Figure 2)

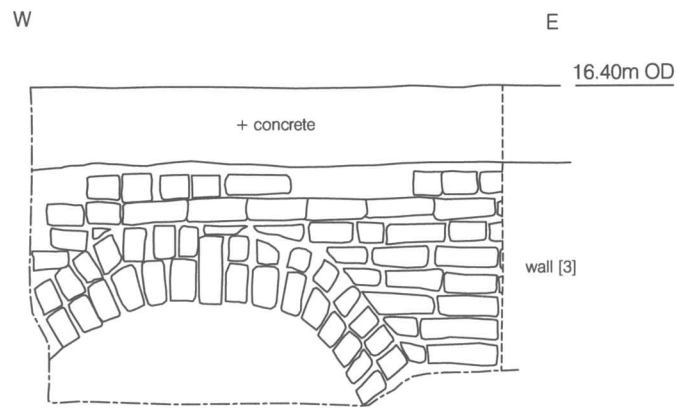
5.5.1 Test Pit 5 was located to the south of Test Pit 1 on Platform 1, 7.30m from the platform edge. It measured 2.20m east-west by 6.20m north-south along its western edge and 2.60m along its eastern edge. It was excavated to a depth of 2.50m in its southern third and 0.50m in its northern two thirds.

5.5.2 The earliest component observed in this trench was a masonry formation [26] very similar to that observed in Test Pit 1, and representing its southern continuation along the platform. Briefly, it comprised a foundation wall aligned north-south, with a blind arch on its eastern face (only exposed at the northern end of the trench) and east-west support walls extending from its western face. Again, as in Test Pit 1, the northern edge of the trench was flush with a roof support pillar. The increased length of the western side of the trench incorporated a second pillar, 4.58m south of the first (face to face), which was centrally located between two of the east-west support walls. Such positioning can also be inferred by extrapolation of the arrangements observed at the northern ends of Test Pits 1 and 5, and would seem to be typical along the length of the platform. The four-stepped footing observed in Test Pit 1 was also discovered along the western side of this pillar, where the trench was excavated to sufficient depth to expose it. Four east-west support walls were revealed in this trench, spaced approximately 1.80m apart (face to face) along its length, and each approximately 0.22m thick. Furthermore, as in Test Pit 1, each wall incorporated an arched opening. The whole of this masonry structure was recorded as one context, as its component parts had been studied in detail in Test Pit 1.

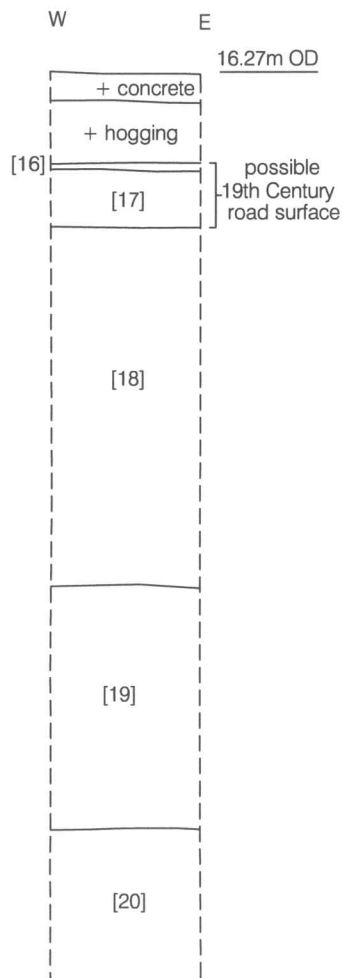
5.5.3 These foundation structures were backfilled with a deposit of brown clayey silt [25] at a height of 15.41m OD and 2.55m thick at the vertical limit of excavation, beyond

which it continued. This layer contained post-medieval brick fragments and is the same as [6] in Test Pit 1. Again, it may represent 19th century deposition contemporary with the construction of the station.

- 5.5.4 Overlying this deposit was a modern layer of sand and rubble (24) at a height of 16.17m OD and 0.76m thick. This was sealed by the modern platform concrete surface at a height of 16.27m OD and 0.10m thick.



Section 1
Trial Pit 1, south facing section of brick arch [3]



Section 8
Trial Pit 3, South facing



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Figure 3
Sections 1 and 8, Trial Pits 1 and 3
1:50

6 CONCLUSION

- 6.1 The earliest deposit observed on site was natural alluvial clay, exposed in Test Pit 3 at a height of 13.77m OD.
- 6.2 All other deposits and remains on site are assumed to be connected with the building and use of King's Cross station from the mid 19th century to the present. This construction work has apparently truncated any earlier archaeological deposits.
- 6.3 Beneath the cab road several dumped deposits were probably intended to raise the ground for the formation of an earlier road surface, which may be represented by the asphalt layer discovered in Test Pits 2, 3 and 4.
- 6.4 Beneath the platform, the foundations of the station building were observed to sit upon a concrete slab at a height of 13.82m OD. This level is similar to that of the natural clay beneath the cab road, and it can be conjectured that the whole site area was reduced to a roughly similar level before in preparation for construction of the station building in the mid 19th century. The foundations consisted of brick-built stepped footings and walls articulated around evenly spaced pillars. The evidence suggests that the main north-south foundation wall runs parallel to a retaining wall to the east delineating the boundary between the station building and the cab road. The spaces between these structures were then backfilled.
- 6.5 The platform surface may originally have been paved with York stone, but has been resurfaced with concrete at a later date, probably some time during the 20th century. Likewise the cab road has also been resurfaced with concrete since its initial formation.

7 BIBLIOGRAPHY

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8 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- 8.1 Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited would like to thank Tim Evans of White Young Green for commissioning the work, and Diane Walls of GLAAS for monitoring it.

- 8.2 The authors would like to thank Chris Mayo for project managing the watching brief and editing the present report, and Josephine Brown for the illustrations.

APPENDIX 1: CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

CONTEXT	TYPE	DESCRIPTION
1	Layer	Modern Backfill of Arches
2	Layer	Same as [1] and [4]
3	Masonry	19th Century Brick Masonry
4	Layer	Same as [1] and [2]
5	Masonry	19th Century Masonry
6	Layer	Original Backfill of Arches
7	Layer	Indurated 19th Century Make Up Layer For Road
8	Layer	Clay Silt
9	Layer	Sandy Silt
10	Layer	Gravelly Clay
11	Layer	Dark Asphalt layer
12	Masonry	Upturned 19th Century Brick arch
13	Layer	Silty clay
14	Layer	Same As [6]
15	Layer	Lime concrete Layer
16	Layer	Same As [11]
17	Layer	Same As [7]
18	Layer	Same As [8]
19	Layer	Same As [10]
20	Layer	Natural Clay
21	Layer	Same As [11] and [16]
22	Layer	Same As [7] and [17]
23	Layer	Same As [8] and [18]
24	Layer	Same As [4], [1] and [2]
25	Layer	Same as [6]
26	Layer	Same as [3], [5] and [12]

APPENDIX 2: OASIS REPORT FORM

OASIS ID: preconst1-19304

Project details

Project name	Kings Cross Cab Road
Short description of the project	This report details the results of an archaeological watching brief undertaken by Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited at King's Cross Cab Road, King's Cross, London Borough of Camden. The central National Grid Reference for the site is TQ 3032 8310. The watching brief was undertaken between July 2006 and August 2006 and was commissioned by White Young Green. The watching brief monitored a geotechnical investigation being conducted to investigate ground conditions and foundation structures. Five trial pits were dug during the course of the work. The watching brief revealed alluvial clay overlain by made ground and 19th century structural remains associated with King's Cross Station.
Project dates	Start: 04-07-2006 End: 04-08-2006
Previous/future work	No / Not known
Any associated project reference codes	KCE 06 - Sitecode
Type of project	Recording project
Current Land use	Transport and Utilities 2 - Other transport infrastructure
Monument type	RAILWAY STATION Post Medieval
Investigation type	'Watching Brief'
Prompt	Geotechnical Investigation

Project location

Country	England
Site location	GREATER LONDON CAMDEN CAMDEN King's Cross Cab Road
Postcode	N1
Study area	21.00 Square metres
Site coordinates	TQ 3032 8310 51.5312531478 -0.120992224601 51 31 52 N 000 07 15 W Point

Project creators

Name of Organisation	Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd
Project brief originator	White Young Green
Project design originator	Chris Mayo

Project director/manager	Chris Mayo
Project supervisor	Mike Bazley
Type of sponsor/funding body	White Young Green
Name of sponsor/funding body	White Young Green

Project archives

Physical Archive recipient	LAARC
Physical Archive ID	KCE 06
Physical Contents	'Ceramics'
Digital Archive recipient	LAARC
Digital Archive ID	KCE 06
Digital Contents	'none'
Digital Media available	'Spreadsheets','Text'
Paper Archive recipient	LAARC
Paper Archive ID	KCE 06
Paper Contents	'none'
Paper Media available	'Context sheet','Matrices','Plan','Section','Unpublished Text'

Project bibliography 1

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