

**LAND AT 111 WESTMINSTER  
BRIDGE ROAD, LONDON SE1 7HR**

**AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING  
BRIEF**

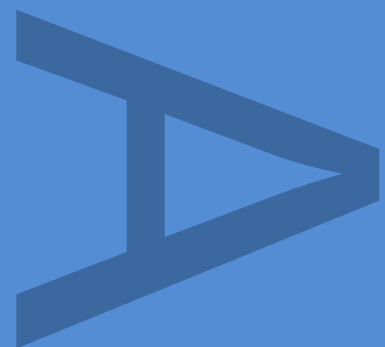
**LOCAL PLANNING AUTHORITY:  
LONDON BOROUGH OF LAMBETH**

**PLANNING APPLICATION NUMBER:  
13/03409/F**

**PCA REPORT NO: 11959**

**SITE CODE: WSM14**

**JANUARY 2015**



**PRE-CONSTRUCT ARCHAEOLOGY**



DOCUMENT VERIFICATION

LAND AT 111 WESTMINSTER BRIDGE ROAD,  
LONDON SE1 7HR

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

Quality Control

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**Land at 111 Westminster Bridge Road, London SE1 7HR**

**An Archaeological Watching Brief**

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**Site Code:** WSM14

**Central NGR:** TQ 3103 7946

**Local Planning Authority:** London Borough of Lambeth

**Planning Reference:** 13/03409/F

**Commissioning Client:** CgMs Limited

**On behalf of:** McAleer & Rushe Contracts UK Limited

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**January 2015**

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## **1 ABSTRACT**

- 1.1 This report presents the results of an archaeological watching brief conducted by Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd on land at 111 Westminster Bridge Road, London Borough of Lambeth. The site is centred at National Grid Reference TQ 3103 7946.
- 1.2 Following an approved Written Scheme of Investigation prepared by CgMs Consultants Limited (CgMs Consulting Limited 2014), an archaeological watching brief was carried out sporadically between 6<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> November 2014.
- 1.3 Natural sand and gravel was recorded at heights varying between 2.00m OD and 1.00m OD. The top of the superficial geology had been truncated during the redevelopment of the site in the 1950s and was overlain by 2-3m of mass poured concrete and modern made ground. No archaeological features or deposits were encountered.

## **2 INTRODUCTION**

- 2.1 An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited at 111 Westminster Bridge Road, London Borough of Lambeth between 6<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> November 2014. The site is centred at National Grid Reference TQ 3103 7946 (Figure 1).
- 2.2 The watching brief consisted of monitoring areas of deep excavation in the southwest and northeast corners of the site (Figure 2) in order to address the following research design objectives:
- 2.2.1 To determine, if possible, the date of the earliest human activity in this area and the subsequent sequence of occupation.
- To help further inform our understanding of past activity in the area.
  - To record any significant archaeological deposits which may be exposed during works associated with redevelopment.
- 2.3 The site is bordered by Westminster Bridge Road to the north, commercial properties to the east, west and south. The archaeological watching brief was conducted by Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited under the supervision of Ian Cipin and Chris Mayo, who also project managed the project. The archaeological work was commissioned by Richard Meager of CgMs Consulting and the project was monitored by Mark Stevenson, English Heritage Senior Archaeology Planning Officer for the London Borough of Lambeth.
- 2.4 The site was recorded under the unique site code WSM14, issued by the Museum of London. The completed archive comprising written, drawn and digital image records will, upon completion of the project, be deposited with the London Archaeological Archive and Research Centre (LAARC) under that code.
- 2.5 There are no Scheduled Monuments on or close to the site although the site is located within an Archaeological Priority Zone as defined in the Borough's Local Development Framework Proposals Map.

### **3 PLANNING BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 The planning background was discussed in detail in an archaeological desk based assessment (CgMs Consulting Limited 2013) produced for the study site prior to the watching brief commencing and is therefore not reproduced here. Conditional planning permission (planning reference: 13/03409/F) has been granted for the proposed redevelopment of the site.
- 3.2 One of the conditions of the planning permission outlined the need for a programme of archaeological work to be in place prior to the commencement of the redevelopment. The archaeological condition reads:
- 3.3 No development shall take place until the applicant has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted by the applicant and approved by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall only take place in accordance with the detailed scheme pursuant to this condition. The archaeological works shall be carried out by a suitably qualified investigating body acceptable to the Local Planning Authority.
- 3.4 In response to the above condition, a Written Scheme of Investigation was prepared by CgMs Consulting (2014) and approved by Mr Stevenson of English Heritage. The results of the watching brief are reported upon here.
- 3.5 The previous structure at the site had a localised basement within the northern and northeastern areas. The proposed development will incorporate a basement across the entire site.

## **4 GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY**

### **4.1 Geology**

4.1.1 The British Geological Survey (BGS) defines the bedrock geology underlying the area as London Clay. According to the BGS the bedrock geology is overlain by superficial deposits of the Kempton Park Gravel Formation. These sand and gravel deposits formed up to 2 million years ago during the Quaternary Period from rivers depositing detrital material in channels to form river terrace deposits (BGS 2015). The borehole carried out in 2013 identified the top of the truncated Kempton Park gravel at 3.10m below the previous ground level at the site, therefore approximately +0.90m OD.

### **4.2 Topography**

4.2.1 Historically the site was situated in an area of marshland dissected by braided stream channels. However, by the late 18<sup>th</sup> century/early 19<sup>th</sup> century development within the area had started to alter the natural landscape. Today the site is largely level at approximately 4.00m OD.



## **5 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

An in-depth study of the archaeological and historical background of the site was undertaken during the desk based assessment of the site (CgMs Consulting Limited 2013). The following highlights the archaeological potential for each period as determined by the archaeological desk based assessment.

### **5.1 Prehistoric**

5.1.1 The desk based assessment concluded that the study site had a low archaeological potential for the Palaeolithic and moderate potential for the Mesolithic. This was based on the lack of Palaeolithic material previously recorded within the vicinity of the site and the past discovery of substantial assemblages of Mesolithic worked flint, burnt flint and animal bone recovered from nearby sites.

5.1.2 Several archaeological excavations in the vicinity of the site have produced assemblages of Neolithic pottery and flint including the recovery of a hand axe from the River Thames and an arrowhead from a site located at 126-164 Westminster Bridge Road. With the exception of a large sand-filled feature identified at Parliament Street roughly 500m to the northwest of the study site, little evidence exists for Bronze Age and Iron Age activity within the area. Therefore the archaeological potential of the study site for the Bronze Age and Iron Age was considered to be low.

### **5.2 Roman**

5.2.1 Previous archaeological investigations in the vicinity of the study site have produced limited evidence for Roman activity within the area. However, the presence of Roman material was prominent enough to consider the overall archaeological potential of the site for the Roman period to be moderate.

### **5.3 Anglo-Saxon and Medieval**

5.3.1 Anglo Saxon activity has been recorded 300-500m to the north-west, west and south-west of the study site while medieval settlement activity has been identified along Lower Marsh to the northeast. The site was deemed to have a low archaeological potential for the Anglo-Saxon and medieval periods.

### **5.4 Post-Medieval**

5.4.1 Cartographic evidence suggests that the site continued to occupy an area of cultivated land until the late 18<sup>th</sup> or early 19<sup>th</sup> century. By the early 19<sup>th</sup> century terraces fronting Westminster Bridge Road were within the study site, and by the close of the century the site was almost entirely built up. The buildings within the site appear to have been almost completely destroyed during WWII bombing; subsequently the study site was redeveloped in the 1950s. As such, the overall archaeological potential of the study site for the post-medieval and modern periods was determined to be generally low.

## **6 ARCHAEOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY**

- 6.1 The archaeological watching brief monitored obstruction removal works necessitated following the demolition of the previous building. Monitoring visits were made during works to the northeastern and southwestern parts of the site, during which it became clear that the superficial deposits underlying the site had been heavily truncated across the entire site during the 1950s redevelopment.
- 6.2 Excavation was carried out using 360° plant to a formation depth of approximately 2.50 to 3.00m below ground level. The excavation was archaeologically monitored and access was provided to investigate and record the deposits encountered during the ground reduction.
- 6.3 All deposits during the ground reduction were recorded on *pro-forma* context sheets. The areas of archaeological monitoring were recorded on site engineering drawings provided by the client. A digital photographic record was taken of the excavation.
- 6.4 All vertical measurements were recorded as depth below ground level and OD heights were later calculated based a ground level height of 4.00m OD.
- 6.5 The archaeological works were monitored by Mark Stevenson, the Archaeological Adviser to the London Borough of Lambeth.
- 6.6 The complete archive produced during the watching brief, comprising written, drawn and photographic records will be deposited with LAARC, identified by site code WSM14.

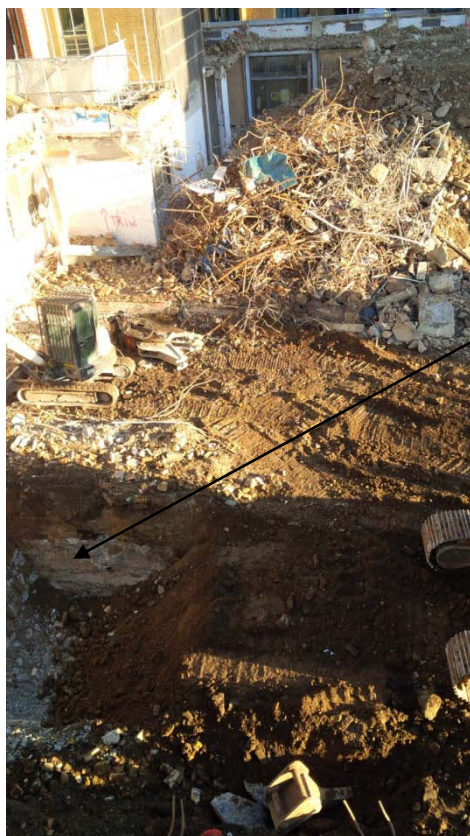
## 7 ARCHAEOLOGICAL SEQUENCE

### 7.1 Phase 1: Natural

7.1.1 The earliest deposit encountered during the watching brief was a layer of naturally deposited sandy gravel, [1]. This comprised moderately poorly sorted small to medium sub-angular and rounded gravel in a silty moderately coarse sand matrix. The deposit represents the top of the drift geology recorded by the British Geological Survey as forming part of the Kempton Park Gravel Formation. It was recorded at the highest point at approximately 2.00m OD in the west central part of the site where the truncation caused by the present building had been less severe. In the remaining parts of the site the height of the deposit was recorded at approximately 1.00m OD.

### 7.2 Phase 2: Modern

7.2.1 Across the entire site the natural gravel, [1], was sealed by between 2m to 3m of mass poured concrete recorded to a height of approximately 4.00m OD. Where the concrete did not exceed a thickness of 2m it was sealed by a made ground deposit, [2], comprising dark brown sandy silt mixed with brick and concrete rubble. It is clear that this resulted from the redevelopment of the site in the 1950s.



*Plate 1: View northeast overlooking obstruction removal at southwestern corner of the site. Note the extensive concrete foundations of the former building which extend to approximately 3.0m BGL*



*Plate 2: View northeast overlooking removal of basement slab at northeastern corner of the site. This work confirmed that the basement had truncated the site beyond the level of the natural superficial geology*



*Plate 3: View north overlooking obstruction removal at central western side of the site. Note the extensive concrete foundations of the former building which extend to approximately 2.0m BGL, truncating into the surface of the natural gravels.*

## **8 CONCLUSIONS**

### **8.1 Original Research Objectives**

*To determine, if possible, the date of the earliest human activity in this area and the subsequent sequence of occupation.*

- 8.1.1 The earliest cultural remains encountered were related to the redevelopment of the study site in the 1950s. These consisted of the deep mass poured concrete footings for the existing buildings and of course the buildings themselves. The mass poured concrete extended to a depth of around 3m and the foundation construction had truncated the natural gravels across the entire site.

*To help further inform our understanding of past activity in the area.*

- 8.1.2 The current watching brief observed that the natural gravels underlying the site had been heavily truncated by the redevelopment of the site in the 1950s. No archaeological deposits, features or structures survived below the impact level of the existing buildings. Therefore the potential for the results of the watching brief to contribute to the understanding of past activity within the area is restricted to the post-WWII period.

*To record any significant archaeological deposits which may be exposed during works associated with redevelopment.*

- 8.1.3 No archaeological deposits were exposed during the redevelopment works.

### **8.2 Conclusions**

- 8.2.1 The work has demonstrated that the previous 1950s development at the site had completely truncated the superficial geology to a depth below ground level between 2.0m and 3.0m. No archaeological deposits or remains were observed or can be expected to have survived the previous construction.

- 8.2.2 Once the project is deemed complete, the completed archive comprising all site records from the fieldwork will eventually be deposited by Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited with LAARC under site code WSM14. Until then the archive will be stored at our headquarters in Brockley, London.

- 8.2.3 The results of the archaeological investigation will be published as an entry in the *London Archaeologist* 'Round Up'.

## **9 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

- 9.1 Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited would like to thank Richard Meager of CgMs Consulting for commissioning the work and Mark Stevenson, the Archaeological Adviser to the London Borough of Lambeth, for monitoring the project. PCA also thanks the client, McAleer & Rushe Contracts UK Limited, for funding the project and their staff Steve McMenamin and Ciaran Tiffney for accommodating the archaeological works on site.
- 9.2 The author would like to thank Ian Cipin for supervising the archaeological site work, Chris Mayo for carrying out monitoring visits, project managing the watching brief and editing this report and Hayley Baxter for the CAD illustrations.

## 10 BIBLIOGRAPHY

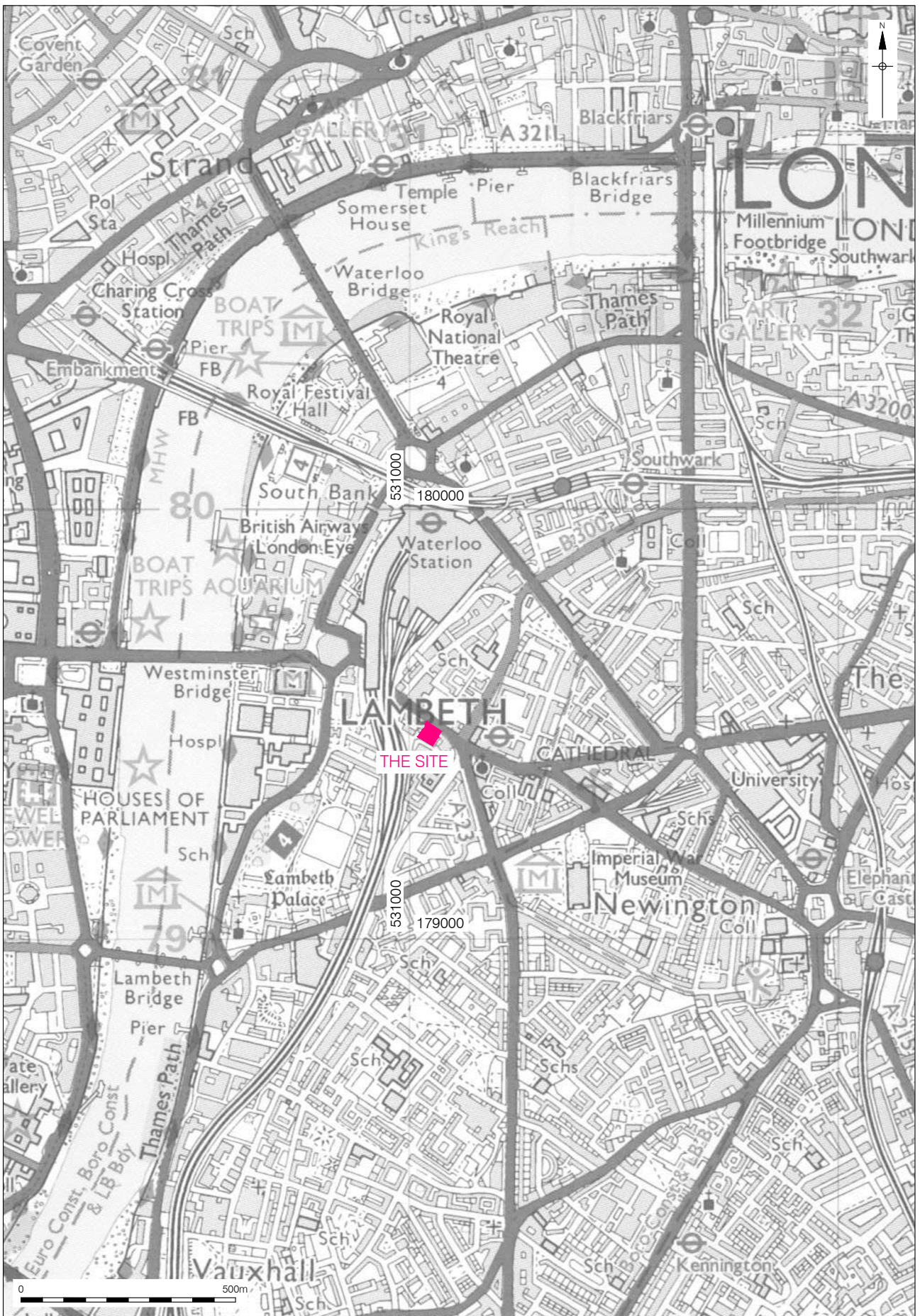
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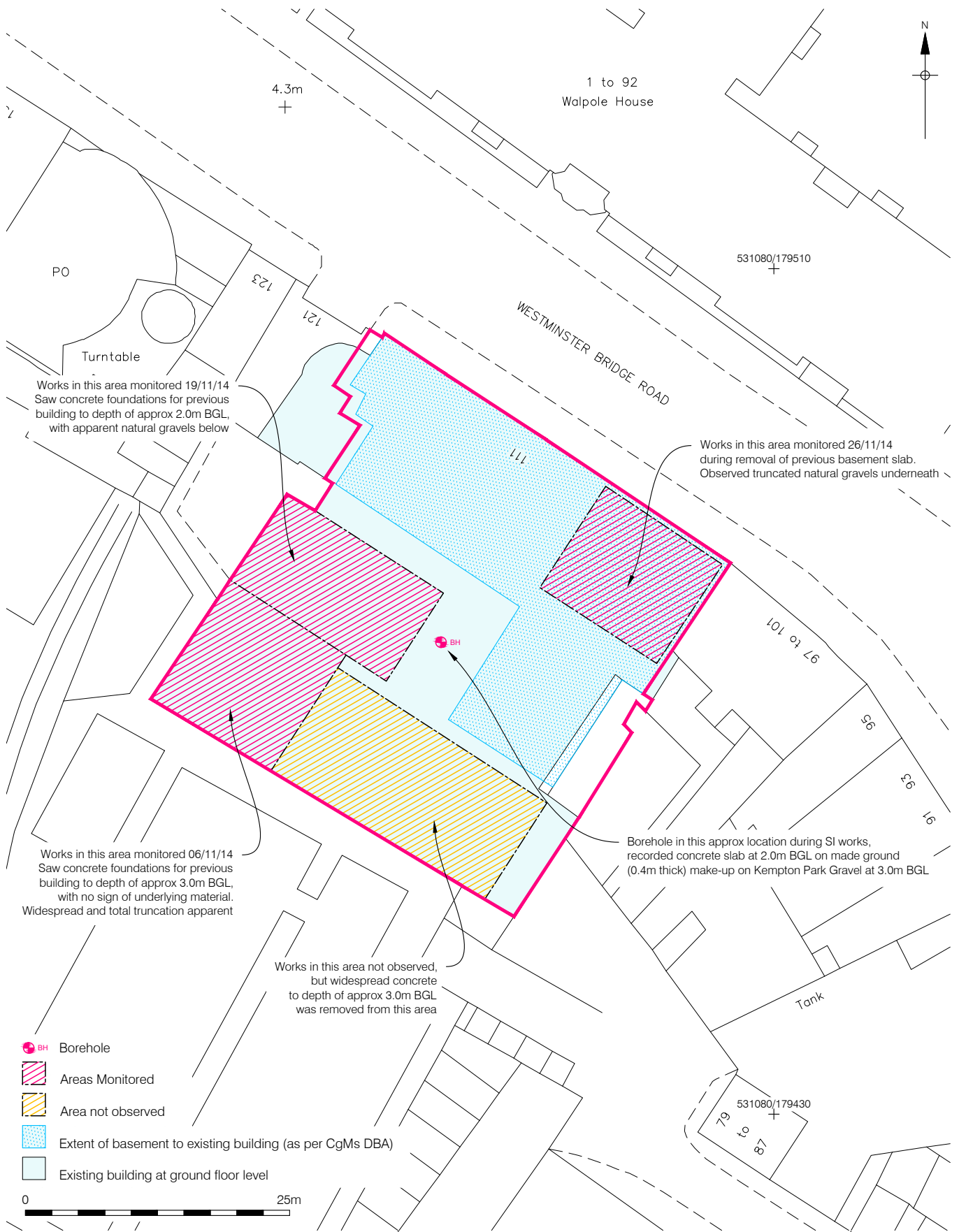
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Figure 1  
Site Location  
1:12,500 at A4





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 20/01/15 HB

Figure 2  
 Areas Monitored  
 1:500 at A4

## APPENDIX 1: CONTEXT INDEX

Site Code	Context	Type	Description	Phase
WSM14	1	Layer	Natural gravel	1
WSM14	2	Layer	Made ground	2

## APPENDIX 2: SITE MATRIX



## APPENDIX 3: OASIS FORM

**OASIS ID: preconst1-200660**

### Project details

Project name	Land at 111 Westminster Bridge Road, London
Short description of the project	A watching brief was carried out during ground works at 111 Westminster Bridge Road, Lambeth, London. No archaeological deposits, features or structures were encountered during the monitoring exercise as the drift geology underlying the site had been heavily truncated during a previous phase of redevelopment in the 1950s.
Project dates	Start: 06-11-2014 End: 26-11-2014
Previous/future work	No / No
Any associated project reference codes	WSM14 - Sitecode
Any associated project reference codes	13/03409/F - Planning Application No.
Type of project	Recording project
Site status	Local Authority Designated Archaeological Area
Current Land use	Industry and Commerce 2 - Offices
Monument type	MADE GROUND Modern
Significant Finds	NONE None
Investigation type	"Watching Brief"
Prompt	Planning condition

### Project location

Country	England
Site location	GREATER LONDON LAMBETH LAMBETH Land at 111 Westminster Bridge Road, Lambeth, London
Postcode	SE1 7HR
Study area	0.50 Hectares
Site coordinates	TQ 3103 7946 51.4983736757 -0.112114458545 51 29 54 N 000 06 43 W Point
Lat/Long Datum	Unknown
Height OD / Depth	Min: 1.00m Max: 2.00m

### Project creators

Name of Organisation	Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited
Project brief originator	CgMs Consulting
Project design originator	Richard Meager
Project director/manager	Chris Mayo
Project supervisor	Chris Mayo
Project supervisor	Ian Cipin

Type of sponsor/funding body Developer  
Name of sponsor/funding body McAleer & Rushe Contracts UK Limited

#### Project archives

Physical Archive Exists? No  
Digital Archive recipient LAARC  
Digital Archive ID WSM14  
Digital Contents "Stratigraphic"  
Digital Media available "Images raster / digital photography", "Images vector", "Text"  
Paper Archive recipient LAARC  
Paper Archive ID WSM14  
Paper Contents "Stratigraphic"  
Paper Media available "Context sheet", "Plan"

#### Project bibliography 1

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