1 PAUL JULIUS CLOSE (REUTERS), LONDON, E14 2EH

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF





LOCAL PLANNING AUTHORITY:
LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS

PLANNING APPLICATION NUMBER: PA/13/01861

PCA REPORT NO: 11098

SITE CODE: PLJ14

MAY 2015



PRE-CONSTRUCT ARCHAEOLOGY

1 PAUL JULIUS CLOSE (REUTERS), LONDON, E14 2EH

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

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Report Number	R12098

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1 PAUL JULIUS CLOSE (REUTERS), LONDON, E14 2EH

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

Site Code: PLJ 14

Local Planning Authority: London Borough of Tower Hamlets

Planning Application PA/13/01861

Number:

Central NGR: TQ 3861 8062

Commissioning Client: CgMs Consulting

on behalf of Thomson Reuters

Written and researched by: Ian Cipin and Chris Mayo

Date: May 2015

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May 2015

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	CONTENTS	
1	Abstract	4
2	Introduction	5
3	Planning Background	ε
4	Geological And Topographical Background	7
5	Archaeological And Historical Background	8
6	Methodology	g
7	Archaeological Phase Discussion	11
7.1	Phase 1: 19 th Century	11
7.2	Phase 2: Post-1893	11
7.3	Phase 3: Pre-1934	14
7.4	Phase 4: By 1950	15
7.5	Phase 5: 1980s	17
8	Discussion And Conclusions	18
9	Acknowledgements	19
10	Bibliography	19
	ILLUSTRATIONS	
	Figure 1: Site Location	20
	Figure 2: Trench Locations	21
	Figure 3: Plan Of Dock Structure	22
	Figure 4: Sections	23
	PLATES	
	Plate 1: Made Ground Deposit [3] Within Trench 8, View Se	11
	Plate 2: Extended Dock Wall [1] In Trench 2, View Southeast	12
	Plate 3: Extended Dock Wall [1] In Trench 1, View Southwest	12
	Plate 4: Extended Dock Wall [1] In Trench 2, View North	13
	Plate 5: Extended Dock Wall [1] In Trench 2, View Northeast	13
	Plate 6: Timber Sleepers Set In Concrete [6] In Trench 3, View South	14
	Plate 7: Travelling Crane Rail [6] Set In Concrete In Trench 6, View Northwest	14
	Plate 8: Staircase Structure [5], View North	15
	Plate 9: Staircase Structure [5], View Northeast	16
	Plate 10: Staircase Structure [5], View West	16
	Plate 11: Detail Of Staircase Structure [5]	16
	Plate 12: 1980s Backfill Of Dock In Trench 9, View East	17
	Plate 13: View Of Retained Structure To 1876-1878 Graving Dock, Beneath Reuters Data	Centre,
	South Of The Site	18

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Site Matrix	24
Appendix 2: Context Index	25
Appendix 3: Oasis Form	
Appendix of Odolo Form	20

1 ABSTRACT

- 1.1 This report details the working methods and results of an archaeological watching brief undertaken by Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited on land at 1 Paul Julius Close, London, E14 2EH in the London Borough of Tower Hamlets (Figure 1). The watching brief was conducted variously from October 2014 to April 2015 and was commissioned CgMs Consulting on behalf of Thompson Reuters.
- 1.2 Planning permission (PA/13/01861) has been granted for the demolition of the existing security building and the erection of a five level phased external plant compound including basement.
- 1.3 A detailed Archaeological Desk Based Assessment was previously prepared for the site (Gailey 2013a) which concluded that any archaeological features once present upon the site were likely to have been removed by the construction of the late 19th century graving dock.
- 1.4 The archaeological monitoring exercise was undertaken in accordance with an approved Written Scheme of Investigation for the project prepared by the client's archaeological consultant Suzanne Gailey of CgMs Consulting (Gailey 2013b).
- 1.5 No archaeological features or remains pre-dating the 19th century were observed.
- 1.6 A sequence of post-medieval ground reclamation and consolidation was observed cut by the construction trench for the northerly extension of the graving dock in the late 19th century. Associated with the dock extension were found the remains of sleepers and concrete supporting the rails of a travelling crane which was in place by at least 1934. Within the northern end of the dock was found the remains of a staircase by which the dock was accessed. Evidence was also seen for the in-filling of the dock in in the 1980s.
- 1.7 The watching brief did not expose any remains of the original graving dock structure, built in 1876-8, confirming that only the later 19th extension to the original graving dock has been impacted by the proposed basement footprint.

2 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 This report details the results and working methods of an archaeological watching brief undertaken by Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited at 1 Paul Julius Close, London, E14 2EH in the London Borough of Tower Hamlets (Figure 1).
- 2.2 The subject site is bound to the west and south by Paul Julius Close, a car park to the east and a gravel walkway to the north. The site is centred at TQ 3861 8062.
- 2.3 The fieldwork was commissioned by archaeological consultants CgMs Consulting acting on behalf of Thompson Reuters in response to an archaeological condition attached to planning consent for a new development. This will see the construction of an external plant compound associated with the Reuters Data Centre site immediately to the south, permitted under application number PA/13/01861.
- 2.4 Prior to planning consent a detailed Archaeological Desk Based Assessment was prepared by CgMs Consulting (Gailey, 2013a). Post-determination, CgMs Consulting liaised with the Archaeology Advisor to the local planning authority, Adam Single of the Greater London Archaeological Advisory Service (GLAAS), Historic England (previously English Heritage) to agree a mitigation strategy in response to the archaeological conditions. A Written Scheme of Investigation (Gailey 2013b) was prepared which detailed the scope and methodology for the work, and was approved by GLAAS.
- 2.5 The watching brief was supervised by Guy Seddon, Shane Maher, Ireneo Grosso, Joe Brooks and Ian Cipin, and was project managed by Chris Mayo, all of Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited.
- 2.6 The exercise revealed substantial in situ remains of the historic graving dock with 19th century made ground external to the dock which formed the fill of the construction trench necessary for its creation, together with some associated dockside features dating from the 19th and 20th centuries. The dock was backfilled in the 1980s, and evidence for this was seen in the form of imported fill.
- 2.7 No archaeological deposits pre dating the late 19th century were seen.
- 2.8 Site records were compiled using the unique site code PLJ14. The completed archive, upon approval of this report and the project's completion, will be deposited at the London Archaeological Archive and Research Centre (LAARC) identified with this code.

3 PLANNING BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The full background to the planning policies relevant to the proposed scheme are detailed within the desk-based assessment (Gailey 2013a).
- 3.2 Planning permission (PA/13/01861) has been granted by the London Borough of Tower Hamlets for the construction of an external plant compound associated with the Reuters Data Centre site immediately to the south. The compound will include a basement to comprise cable feed zones to support an electrical substation. The northern part of the basement will be 1m deep whilst the southern part will be 3m deep. Piled foundations will be used. The current access road will be retained
- 3.3 The planning consent included two archaeological conditions as follows:

Condition 6

No demolition or 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 to and approved by the local planning authority.

No development or demolition shall take place other that in accordance with the Written Scheme of Investigation so approved.

Condition 7

The development shall not be occupied until the site investigation and post investigation assessment has been completed in accordance with the programme set out in the Written Scheme of Investigation so approved, and the provision made for analysis, publication and dissemination of the results and archive deposition has been secured.

3.4 CgMs Consulting liaised with the Archaeology Advisor to the local planning authority, Adam Single of GLAAS to agree a mitigation strategy in response to the archaeological conditions. A Written Scheme of Investigation (Gailey 2013b) was prepared which detailed the scope and methodology for the work, and was approved by GLAAS.

4 GEOLOGICAL AND TOPOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND

- 4.1 The British Geological Survey (England and Wales Sheet No 256, for North London) indicates that the site is underlain by recent (Holocene) alluvium, overlying a sequence of Palaeocene strata. This latter sequence potentially comprises clay silt and sand of the Lambeth group (Gailey 2013a, 10).
- 4.2 Geotechnical investigations were undertaken by Southern Testing and test pits were monitored by Pre-Construct Archaeology in August 2013 (Gailey, 2013b). Outside the infilled dock an extensive reinforced concrete slab was recorded across the site at around a depth of 1m below ground level which is covered with fill from the time the adjacent Reuters building was constructed. Underlying the concrete slab, made ground was recorded up to at least 3.10m below ground level. The top of the surviving remains of the dock wall was recorded to lie approximately 0.5m-1.10m below ground level. The base of the dock was established at a depth of 8.8m to 9.6m below ground level (falling towards the river) (Gailey 2013a, 10).
- 4.3 The existing ground is approximately level at around 5.7m OD¹. The River Thames is the nearest watercourse, located just over 50m to the southeast of the site.

PCA Report No. R12098

¹ Mission Critical drawing number A0.002, rev A, date 03/07/13

5 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

- 5.1 The full archaeological and historical background to the site has been covered in the Desk Based Assessment (Gailey, 2013a). The document concluded that the site had a low potential for archaeological remains pre-dating the 19th century.
- 5.2 From the 19th century the site lay within the Blackwall ship building yard and by the second half of the 19th century, was occupied by the northern end of a substantial graving dock, constructed between 1876-1878 (Gailey 2013a). The excavation of the dock proceeded to '12 ft below high-water level. A coffer dam was erected to shut out the water from the site and trenches were then sunk along each side of the excavation, to construct the foundations of the side walls. The side walls were built of lias-lime concrete and Portland cement, and were faced with granite ashlar in 8 inch courses. When the sides were complete the centre of the dock was excavated. There were three layers of material; lias lime concrete at the bottom, a 15 inch layer of Portland cement concrete above that and finally 6in and 9inch paving slabs were bedded into the Portland concrete to form the finished bottom of the dock. The completed work was said to have 'the appearance of a well-dressed street crossing'. The dock was 'closed by an iron floating box caisson 67ft long, 10ft wide and nearly 29ft deep...' (Survey of London 1994).
- 5.3 To the west of the dock were associated buildings including engine and boiler houses which extended into the western part of the site. The railway line had been diverted to cross the site from west to east (Gailey 2013a).
- In the late 19th century the dock was lengthened, the extended part faced with bricks rather than ashlared granite (Survey of London 1994). The Goad map of 1933 shows the length of the graving dock that occupied the site by this date. The buildings in the north of the site had been demolished by this date and replaced in part by a Compression House which partly extended into the northern part of the site. The buildings in the west of the site were a Foundry and the northern extent of a Plumbers. The south eastern corner of site was shown to be occupied by part of the Plate Sheds that had been built in the 1920s (Gailey 2013a).
- 5.5 By the 1950s the dock was surrounded by a travelling crane which traversed the site. Mooring posts and a chimney are also shown on contemporary maps. The graving dock remained in use until the closure of the docks in the late 1980s (Gailey 2013a).
- In 1989 the dock was filled in and the Reuters building constructed on the site of the former dock to the south of the site. The former dockland buildings were demolished and cleared by this date and the site itself was redeveloped as the landscaped entrance to Reuters building accessed via Paul Julius Close (Gailey 2013a).
- 5.7 The desk-based assessment concluded that the site had good potential for truncated remains associated with the area's 19th century ship building heritage outside the buried remains of the graving dock.

6 METHODOLOGY

- 6.1 The archaeological watching brief monitored the excavations within the proposed basement footprint and in part the proposed drainage runs. Due to the extent of ground disturbance observed during initial observations of the proposed drainage runs, the GLAAS archaeological advisor to the LBTH confirmed that there was no requirement to continue monitoring the remainder of the drainage works.
- 6.2 In addition to the basement footprint the archaeological watching brief monitored localised excavations (trenches) within the site as follows:

Trench	Dimensions (m)	Location	Purpose
1	8.39 x 1.72	Inside graving dock, against	Excavation within graving
		western face.	dock to record dock
			structure
2	18.54 x 1.64	Inside graving dock, against	Excavation within graving
		eastern face.	dock to record dock
			structure
3	2.95 x 1.29	Outside graving dock at NW	Pile-Probing trench
		corner.	
4	2.68 x 1.07	Outside graving dock at	To expose and identify
		western edge.	existing services
5	11.23 x 5.29	Inside graving dock, at	To expose and remove
		northern extent.	metal obstruction within
			graving dock
6	2.10 x 1.38	Outside graving dock at	Pile-Probing trench
		eastern edge.	
7	4.53 x 2.04	Outside graving dock at	Pile-Probing trench
		eastern edge.	
8	13.27 x 1.40	To west of graving dock.	Drainage trench
9	12.00 x 6.00	Inside graving dock, at SW	Pile-Probing trench
		corner of site.	

- 6.3 Excavation was carried out using 360° mechanical excavators to a general formation level of between 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. The plant was fitted with breakers to open the modern concrete ground horizons, before flat-bladed buckets were used for graded and controlled excavation through underlying strata.
- 6.4 All significant archaeological features were investigated by hand tools and recorded in plan at 1:20 or in section at 1:10 using standard single context recording methods. Photographs were taken where appropriate. All deposits and remains observed during the ground reduction were recorded on proforma context sheets. The areas of archaeological monitoring were recorded on site engineering drawings provided by the client.

- 6.5 The heights of all remains and deposits were calculated as depth below ground level extrapolated from a topographic survey of the site².
- 6.6 The archaeological works were initially monitored by Adam Single and subsequently by John Gould of GLAAS, the Archaeological Advisors to the London Borough of Tower Hamlets.
- 6.7 The complete archive produced during the watching brief, comprising written, drawn and photographic records will be deposited with LAARC, identified by site code PLJ14.

² Mission Critical drawing number A0.002, rev A, date 03/07/13

7 ARCHAEOLOGICAL PHASE DISCUSSION

7.1 Phase 1: 19th Century

7.1.1 Within Trenches 3, 4, 6, 7, 8 and the Basement Trench was observed a substantial deposit of made ground [3] comprising moderately compact mid grey-brown sandy silt with inclusions of ceramic building material (CBM), concrete and coal. It was seen at a maximum height of 4.20m OD with a minimum thickness of 1.0m to the limit of excavation. It is considered to represent imported material dumped across the site as ground consolidation and levelling during the 19th century (Figure 4, Plate 1).



Plate 1: Made ground deposit [3] within Trench 8, view SE

7.2 **Phase 2: Post-1893**

- 7.2.1 The originally constructed graving dock, built between 1876 and 1878, had its northern end at the approximate centre of the site as shown on the 1893 OS map (Gailey 2013a, Figure 10). As is recorded in documentary sources, the dock walls were built of 'lias-lime concrete and Portland cement, and were faced with granite ashlar in 8 inch courses' (Survey of London 1994). By the time of the next map consulted, the 1933 Goad plan (Gailey 2013a, Figure 11), the dock had been extended to the north by an approximate distance of 25m, with the extended part faced with bricks rather than ashlared granite (Survey of London 1994). This late 19th century extension was observed in Trenches 1, 2, 3, 5, 6 and 7, and the Basement Trench.
- 7.2.2 The construction of the extended dock was found to correspond to the historical sources, comprising bricks laid in an English bond and bonded with cement. The extended dock wall [1] was seen on its exposed internal face in Trenches 1 and 2, and here the bricks were found to be glazed white (Plates 2-5). As seen the internal face of the wall was over 3m high. The upper courses were seen to have a

stepped profile and incorporated bull-nosed bricks (Figure 4, Sections 1 and 2), with evidence for the later addition of iron pipes at the surface. The wall was recorded to be approximately 1.2m thick. In Trench 2 the internal, exposed face of the dock wall had been roughly rendered with cement; this is considered to be a much later change. On the eastern side in Trench 2, the extended dock wall was visible for in excess of 18m and was recorded at an upper height of approximately 5.00m OD.



Plate 2: Extended dock wall [1] in Trench 2, view southeast



Plate 3: Extended dock wall [1] in Trench 1, view southwest



Plate 4: Extended dock wall [1] in Trench 2, view north



Plate 5: Extended dock wall [1] in Trench 2, view northeast

7.2.3 The construction of the extended dock had been undertaken within a construction trench [7] which was observed in Trenches 3 and 6 and the Basement Trench to extend from the face of the wall it contained by between 0.8m and 1.15m. This construction cut had been made form a height of approximately 5.50m OD and had a near vertical face (Figure 4, Section 4). The base of the cut was not seen. Two upper fills were observed within the cut; the lower [9] comprised black clinker ash and the upper [8] was similar but with a more reddish hue.

7.3 **Phase 3: Pre-1934**

- 7.3.1 The next series remains found during the works are considered to correlate to features discernible from the 1950 OS map (Gailey 2013a, Figure 13).
- 7.3.2 In Trenches 3, 6 and 7 and the Basement Trench were found a series of timber sleepers or concrete supporting rails [6] which match the location of a travelling crane seen on the 1950 OS map. The sleepers were laid onto a concrete bedding, which sat at around 4.90m OD, and the sleepers projected up slightly from this. They were laid at intervals of approximately 0.86m, and were generally 1.15m long by 0.25m wide and 0.2m deep. The tracks they carried were not found in all expected locations, being observed on the sleepers in Trenches 6 and 7 but missing from the sleepers in Trench 3 (Plate 6). The implication is of sporadic removal of the rails for reuse elsewhere.
- 7.3.3 In no location were two in situ rails observed and therefore it was not possible to discern the gauge of the travelling crane's bogey.



Plate 6: Timber sleepers set in concrete [6] in Trench 3, view south



Plate 7: Travelling crane rail [6] set in concrete in Trench 6, view northwest

7.3.4 Although not illustrated on the Goad plan of 1933, it is most likely that the travelling crane was established well before the 1950 OS map, perhaps even being contemporary with the extension of the dock. A cross-section of the wall prepared in 1934 (Gailey 2013a, Figure 12) for the Thames Flood Prevention Plan shows sleepers set at contemporary ground level for the dock, carrying rails for the travelling crane. The annotation to the section records the addition of iron pipes set within a sump constructed around the perimeter of the dock beneath the sleepers as a means of water management; clearly therefore the travelling crane was in place by 1934 but its configuration was subject to periodic renewal and adjustment.

7.4 **Phase 4: By 1950**

7.4.1 Exposed within Trench 5 within the northern end of the dock was the remains of a staircase by which the dock would have been accessed. The 1950 OS map shows the presence of such a structure, with a platform at ground level at the northernmost end and then steps descending anti-clockwise within the perimeter of the dock. The structure [5] found in Trench 5 comprised rolled steel girders which were fixed by means of bolts, rivets and welding. There was evidence for cabling within ducts, most likely to provide electrical lighting to either the staircase structure or to the lower area of the dock (Plates 8-11). The structure comprised a gangway measuring 1.12 in width and was observed in Trench 5 to extend for a distance of at least 9.5m. The structure was fixed to the internal face of the dock wall by means of bolts.



Plate 8: Staircase structure [5], view north



Plate 9: Staircase structure [5], view northeast



Plate 10: Staircase structure [5], view west



Plate 11: Detail of staircase structure [5]

7.5 **Phase 5: 1980s**

7.5.1 It is documented that the dock was infilled during the 1980s (Gailey, 2013a) and this was manifested in Trenches 1, 2, 5, 9 and the Basement Trench as context [4]. It comprised of moderately compact mid-dark brown sandy silt with lenses of clay and ash with inclusions of 20th century CBM, concrete, rubber pipes, metal, wood and other modern material. It was seen at a height of 4.81m OD and at its deepest, in Trench 9, had a thickness of 2.20m at the limit of excavation (Plate 12).



Plate 12: 1980s backfill of dock in Trench 9, view east

8 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

- 8.1 The watching brief monitored groundworks necessary for the new scheme in locations across the site. This comprised excavations for the new basement footprint internal and extrenal to the dock structure, localised pile probing and some of the proposed drainage runs.
- 8.2 No archaeological features or remains pre-dating the 19th century were observed.
- A sequence of post-medieval ground reclamation and consolidation was observed cut by the construction trench for the northerly extension of the graving dock in the late 19th century. Associated with the dock extension were found the remains of sleepers and concrete supporting the rails of a travelling crane which was in place by at least 1934. Within the northern end of the dock was found the remains of a staircase by which the dock was accessed. Evidence was also seen for the in-filling of the dock in in the 1980s.
- 8.4 The watching brief did not expose any remains of the original graving dock structure, built in 1876-8. Historical sources state that the original structure comprised 'lias-lime concrete and Portland cement, and were faced with granite ashlar in 8 inch courses' (Survey of London 1994), and this is confirmed by the elements of the original dock which survive in situ beneath the Reuters Data Centre building to the south of the site (Plate 13). The northern extension comprised concrete faced with glazed brick, as was seen in several locations during the watching brief. The profile of the wall of the northern extension, built in brick, is similar to that shown on a 1934 section which shows a stepped upper coursing atop what are labelled as 'Granite blocks' (Gailey 2013a, Figure 12), forming the original southern build of the 1870s graving dock.



Plate 13: View of retained structure to 1876-1878 graving dock, beneath Reuters Data Centre, south of the site

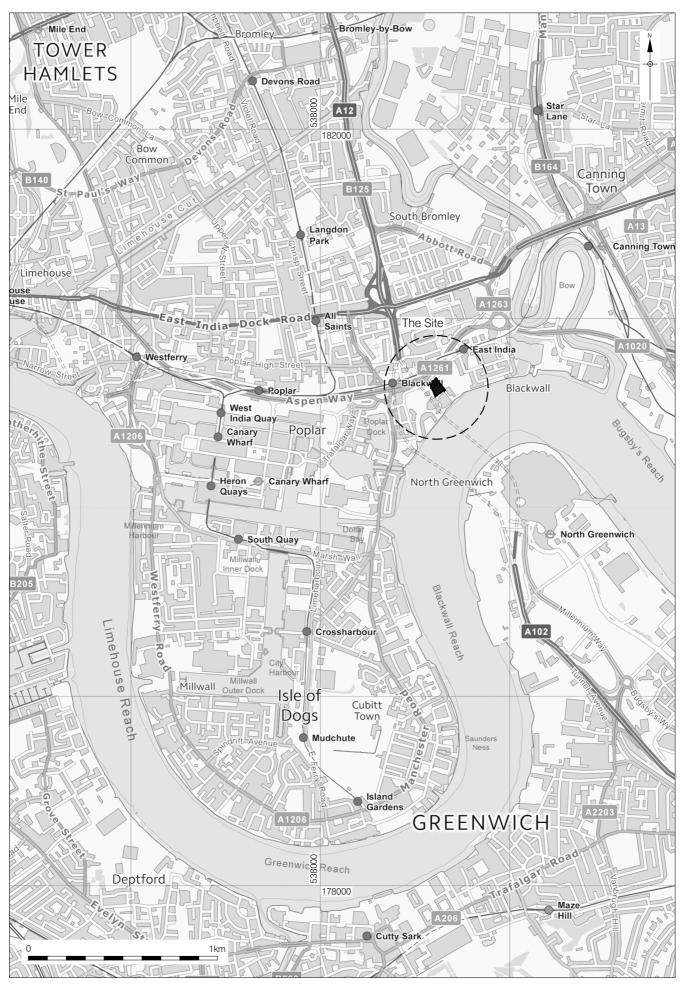
8.5 Upon approval of this report and with confirmation that the condition is discharged the completed archive will be deposited with LAARC under the site code PLJ14. Until then the archive will be stored by PCA at its head offices in Brockley, London. The results of the site investigation will be published as a note by PCA in the annual 'Round-Up' of *London Archaeologist*.

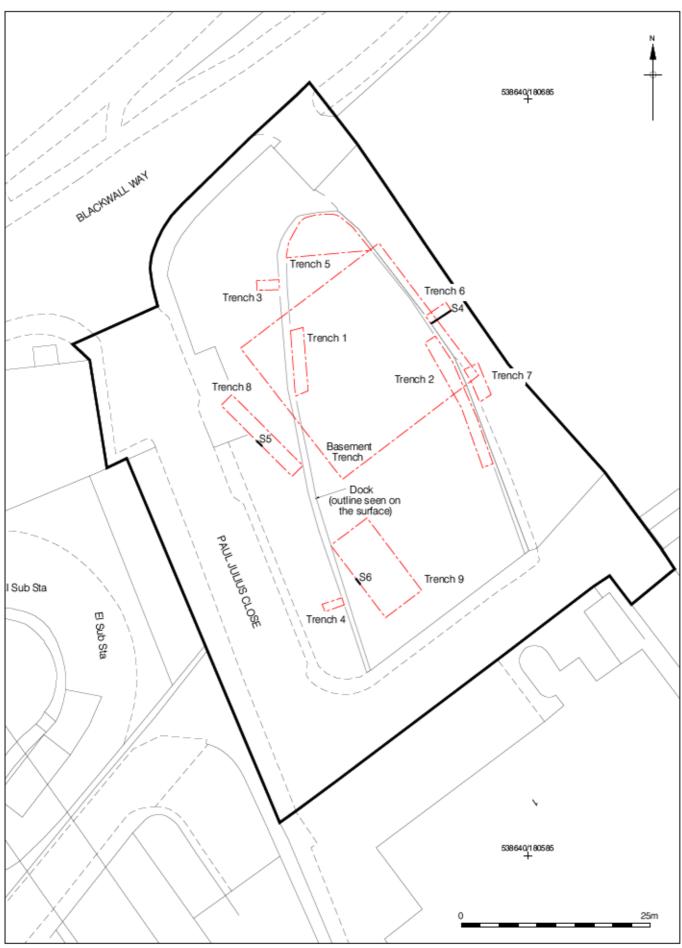
9 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- 9.1 Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd would like to thank Suzanne Gailey of CgMs Consulting for commissioning the work on behalf of Thompson Reuters.
- 9.2 Thanks are also extended to Adam Single and John Gould of the Greater London Archaeology Advisory Service for monitoring the work on behalf of the London Borough of Tower Hamlets.
- 9.3 The author would like to thank Chris Mayo for his project management and editing, and Jennifer Simonson for the illustrations.

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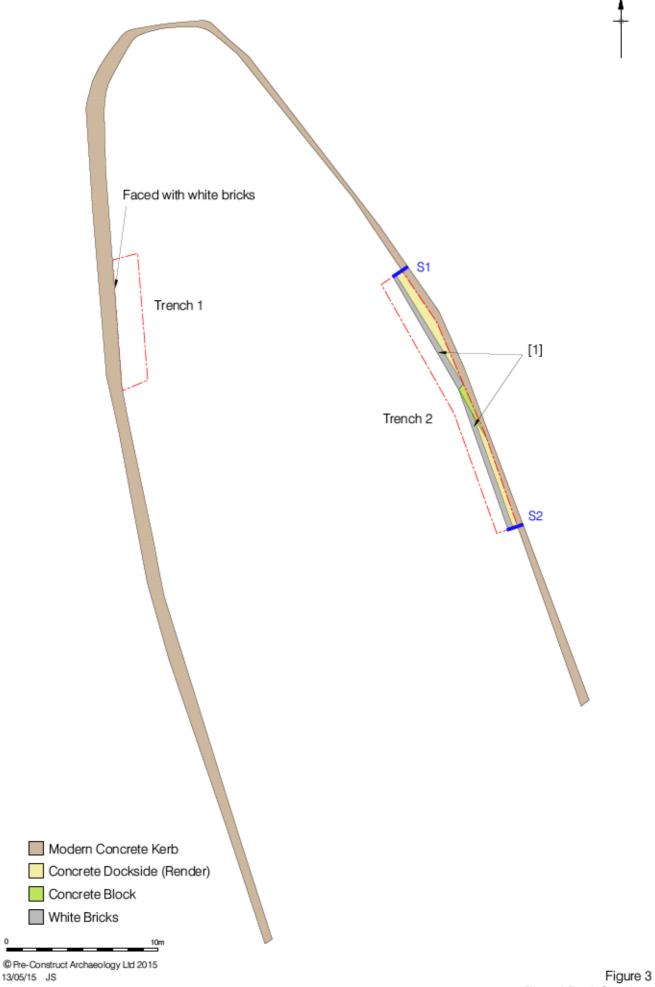


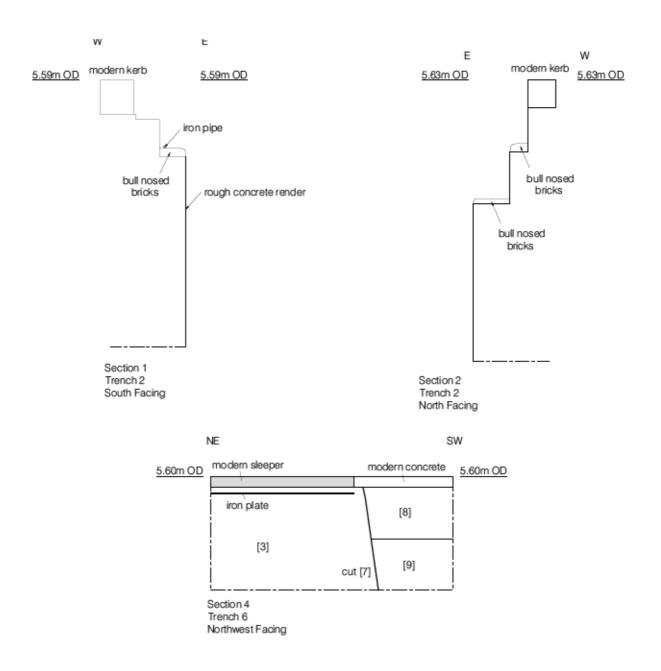


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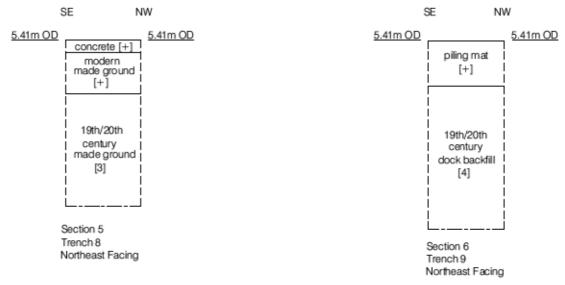
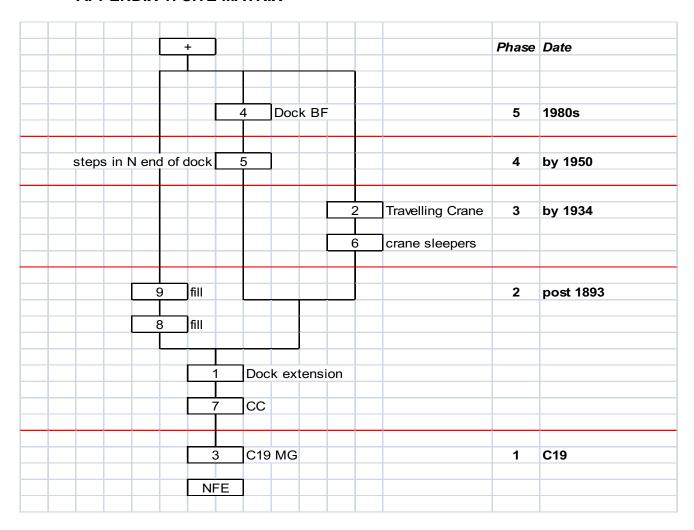




Figure 4 Sections 1:50 at A4

APPENDIX 1: SITE MATRIX



APPENDIX 2: CONTEXT INDEX

Context	Туре	Trench	Notes	Phase	Date
1	Masonry	1-7	Wall of extended dock	3	post 1893
2	Metal	6-7	Tracks for travelling crane	4	by 1950
3	Layer	3-4, 6-8	C19 made ground	1	C19
4	Layer	1-2, 5, 9	1980s Dock Backfill	5	1980s
5	Metal Structure	5	Steps in northern end of dock	4	by 1950
6	Timber	3	Sleepers for travelling crane	4	by 1950
7	Cut	6	Construc cut for dock extension	3	post 1893
8	Fill	6	Construc cut backfill	3	post 1893
9	Fill	6	Construc cut backfill	3	post 1893

APPENDIX 3: OASIS FORM

OASIS ID: preconst1-209151

Pro	iect	deta	ils
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Project name 1 Paul Julius Close (Reuters), London, E14 2EH: An Archaeological Watching Brief

Short description of the project An archaeological watching brief during development groundworks in and around

the former graving dock structure. No archaeological features or remains pre-dating the 19th century were observed. A sequence of post-medieval ground reclamation and consolidation was observed cut by the construction trench for the northerly extension of the graving dock in the late 19th century. Associated with the dock extension were found the remains of sleepers and concrete supporting the rails of a travelling crane which was in place by at least 1934. Within the northern end of the dock was found the remains of a staircase by which the dock was accessed. Evidence was also seen for the in-filling of the dock in in the 1980s. The watching brief did not expose any remains of the original graving dock structure, built in 1876-

.

Project dates Start: 01-10-2014 End: 14-04-2015

Previous/future work Yes / No

Any associated project

reference codes

PLJ14 - Sitecode

Any associated project

reference codes

PA/13/01861 - Planning Application No.

Type of project Recording project

Site status Local Authority Designated Archaeological Area

Current Land use Vacant Land 1 - Vacant land previously developed

Monument type DRY DOCK Post Medieval

Significant Finds NONE None
Investigation type "Watching Brief"
Prompt Planning condition

Project location

Country England

Site location GREATER LONDON TOWER HAMLETS POPLAR 1 Paul Julius Close, London

Postcode E14 2EH

Study area 3819.00 Square metres

Site coordinates TQ 3861 8062 51.5069866834 -0.00251495812216 51 30 25 N 000 00 09 W Point

Lat/Long Datum Unknown

Project creators

Name of Organisation Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited

Project brief originator Local Planning Authority (with/without advice from County/District Archaeologist)

Project design originator CgMs Consulting

Project director/manager Chris Mayo
Project supervisor Guy Seddon
Project supervisor Shane Maher
Project supervisor Ian Cipin
Project supervisor Ireneo Grosso
Project supervisor Joe Brooks

Type of sponsor/funding body Client

Name of sponsor/funding body Thompson Reuters

Project archives	
Physical Archive Exists?	No
Digital Archive recipient	LAARC
Digital Archive ID	PLJ14
Digital Contents	"Stratigraphic"
Digital Media available	"Images raster / digital photography","Images vector","Spreadsheets","Text"
Paper Archive recipient	LAARC
Paper Archive ID	PLJ14
Paper Contents	"Stratigraphic"
Paper Media available	"Context sheet","Miscellaneous Material","Photograph","Report","Section"
Project bibliography 1	
Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	1 Paul Julius Close (Reuters), London, E14 2EH: An Archaeological Watching Brief
Author(s)/Editor(s)	Cipin, I.
Other bibliographic details	PCA R12098
Date	2015
Issuer or publisher	Pre Construct Archaeology Limited
Place of issue or publication	London
Description	Grey literature client report, A4 with PCA covers
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Entered on	14 May 2015

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