

**THE SITE OF THE PROPOSED NEW  
MOSQUE**

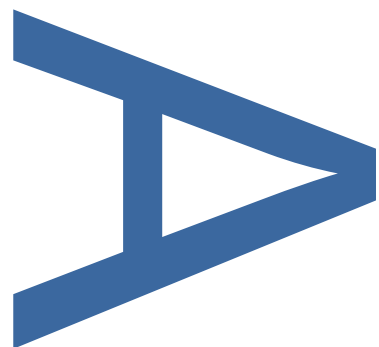
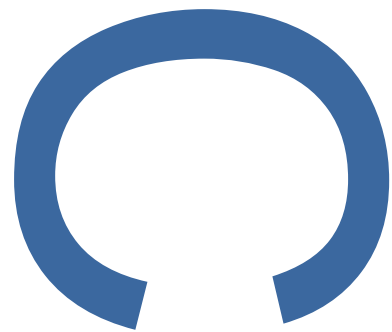
**STEPNEY SHAHJALAL MASJID,  
DUCKETT STREET E1 4LU**

**SUMMARY OF A WATCHING BRIEF  
ON GROUND REDUCTION**

**LOCAL PLANNING AUTHORITY:  
LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER  
HAMLETS**

**PCA REPORT NO: R12807**

**MARCH 2017**





**DOCUMENT VERIFICATION**

**A SUMMARY OF A WATCHING BRIEF ON GROUND  
REDUCTION AT THE SITE OF THE PROPOSED NEW  
MOSQUE, STEPNEY SHAHJALAL MASJID, DUCKETT  
STREET E1 4LU**

Quality Control

<b>Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd</b>	
Project Number	K4734
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	Name & Title	Signature	Date
Text Prepared by:	James Langthorne		March 2017
Graphics Prepared by:	Hayley Baxter		March 2017
Graphics Checked by:	Josephine Brown		March 2017
Project Manager Sign-off:	Chris Mayo		March 2017

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Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited  
Unit 54  
Brockley Cross Business Centre  
96 Endwell Road  
London  
SE4 2PD

# **A Summary of a Watching Brief on Ground Reduction at the site of the Proposed New Mosque, Stepney Shahjalal Masjid, Duckett Street E1 4LU**

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*By James Langthorne, Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited, 18<sup>th</sup> January 2017*

## **1 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 Ground reduction was undertaken at the site of the proposed mosque on Duckett Street, Stepney in the London Borough of Tower Hamlets on 18<sup>th</sup> January 2017. The investigation was centred at TQ 3603 8195. The work was subject to a watching brief conducted by the author.
- 1.2 Ground reduction occurred in an area at the north-eastern corner of the new structure where the proposed footprint sits inside (east of) the conjectured western boundary of the former (Old) East London Cemetery. The excavation area was located on the ground by the client's engineers, and was excavated by machine fitted with a grading bucket operating under continuous archaeological supervision. Levels were taken from triangulation point 206 that was still extant at the site as indicated on the Setting Out Plan (makespaceTechnical Ltd. 30/06/2015).
- 1.3 The reason for archaeological monitoring of this part of the site was due to its location upon a plot of land which lay within the boundary of the former (Old) East London Cemetery, a burial ground that was operational between 1837 and 1852. The mandate of the watching brief was to investigate the presence or absence of archaeological remains, particularly burials, in order to formulate a response should further archaeological mitigation be required.
- 1.4 The ground reduction occurred within an area measuring approximately 100m<sup>2</sup>, defined by the conjectured boundary wall to the former cemetery as calculated by CgMs Consulting ("Foundation Details with Cemetery Extent.pdf, dated 10/08/16). The excavation reached a uniform formation level of 600mm below ground, the depth necessary to receive the foundation raft upon which the new structure will be built.
- 1.5 PCA were commissioned for the work by Brook Williams Group. The project was managed for PCA by Chris Mayo. Curatorial oversight was provided by John Gould of the Greater London Archaeological Advisory Service (GLAAS), on behalf of the London Borough of Tower Hamlets.

## 2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESULTS

2.1 The earliest deposit found during the ground reduction was redeposited fairly loose light-mid brownish orange and yellow grey sandy gravel [10] with occasional fragments of brick rubble and charcoal flecks. Layer [10] was encountered at a maximum height of 10.31m OD and had been truncated by two sub-rectangular features [14] and [16]. Both were orientated east-west and were filled with fairly firm but friable mid brownish grey sandy silt and occasional brick rubble fragments, charcoal flecks and frequent-moderate root action, [13] in cut [14] and [15] in cut [16]. The relative dimensions of both of these features are summarized in the table below:

Context no.	Fill no.	Length (m)	Width (m)	Maximum Height (m OD)
14	13	2.00	0.50	9.95
16	15	2.20	0.35	9.95

As the formation level required for the new structure had been reached, the features were left undisturbed. Both could potentially be isolated graves within the churchyard however it was equally possible that [14] and [16] may be later features such as planter beds, given the level of root activity within their fills.

2.2 Overlying both pit fills [13] and [15] was a 0.36m-thick layer [9] of fairly loose, friable mottled mid grey brown and light-mid orange yellow brown and blackish brown sand and slightly clay sandy silt. Inclusions within this deposit included moderate-frequent brick rubble, occasional-moderate root activity, occasional willow pattern pottery sherds and small sub-rounded and rounded pebbles and very occasional glass bottle fragments and small lengths of rope. Made ground layer [9] was encountered at heights between 10.00-10.41m AOD.

2.3 Made ground [9] was truncated in the southern part of the ground reduction area by a sub-rectangular cut [12]. Cut [12] was filled by fairly firm but friable mid-dark greyish brown slightly clay sandy silt [11] with occasional small sub-rounded and rounded pebbles, brick rubble and the broken fragments of a ceramic pipe. This feature, the remnant of a service cut, ran 1.00m east-west, was 0.30m wide and was encountered at a maximum height of 10.00m OD. As formation depth was achieved at 9.95m OD this feature was not excavated further.

2.4 All deposits within the ground reduction area were ultimately sealed beneath a layer of garden soil [8] composed of fairly firm but friable dark-mid greyish brown with blackish brown mottling slightly clay sandy silt. Occasional-moderate levels of small sub-angular and sub-rounded pebbles, brick and mortar rubble, root activity and very occasional chalk rubble, plastic and concrete fragments were found within the deposit. Layer [8] was up to 0.80m thick and found at heights between 10.30 and 11.21m OD.



*Plate 1: South facing general view of ground reduction area.*



*Plate 2: East facing section of ground reduction area. (1m scale).*

### **3 CONCLUSIONS**

- 3.1 The formation level of the ground reduction was at a height of 9.95m OD but natural sandy gravels, previously seen at heights between 9.92 and 10.15m OD during an earlier archaeological investigation within the boundaries of the cemetery<sup>1</sup>, were not encountered during the excavation. However the redeposited sandy gravels that were the earliest deposit found in the course of the ground reduction may have been a relatively thin interface between later made ground deposits and the natural sandy gravel, rather than being indicative of significant truncation of the natural in this area of site.
- 3.2 The watching brief at Duckett Street did reveal the upper levels of two linear cuts, [14] and [16], which could have been graves; however it was equally possible that they were small planter beds. They were left undisturbed. No articulated or disarticulated human bone was recovered from any of the deposits encountered during the ground reduction.

### **4 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

- 4.1 Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited would like to thank Brook Williams Group for commissioning the project. We particularly thank Adam Ahmad and his colleagues for accommodating the work on site.

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<sup>1</sup> Keith-Lucas, F. 2004 'Archaeological Evaluation in Shandy Park, Duckett Street, Stepney, London Borough of Tower Hamlets', unpublished report for CgMs

## 5 OASIS REPORT FORM

**OASIS ID: preconst1-278105**

### Project details

Project name	Watching Brief on Ground Reduction at the site of the Proposed New Mosque, Stepney Shahjalal Masjid, Duckett Street E1 4
Short description of the project	An archaeological watching brief conducted during shallow ground reduction within the NE corner of the proposed development, inside (east of) the western boundary of the former (Old) East London Cemetery. The formation level of the ground reduction was at a height of 9.95m OD but natural sandy gravels, previously seen at heights between 9.92 and 10.15m OD during an earlier archaeological investigation within the boundaries of the cemetery, were not encountered during the excavation. However the redeposited sandy gravels that were the earliest deposit found in the course of the ground reduction may have been a relatively thin interface between later made ground deposits and the natural sandy gravel, rather than being indicative of significant truncation of the natural in this area of site. The upper levels of two linear cuts, [14] and [16] were seen, which could have been graves; however it was equally possible that they were small planter beds. They were left undisturbed. No articulated or disarticulated human bone was recovered from any of the deposits encountered during the ground reduction.
Project dates	Start: 18-01-2017 End: 18-01-2017
Previous/future work	Yes / Yes
Any associated project reference codes	DUC17 - Sitecode
Type of project	Recording project
Site status	None
Current Land use	Community Service 1 - Community Buildings
Monument type	NONE None
Significant Finds	NONE None
Investigation type	"Watching Brief"
Prompt	Planning condition

### Project location

Country	England
Site location	GREATER LONDON TOWER HAMLETS STEPNEY Stepney Shahjalal Masjid, Duckett Street
Postcode	E1 4LU
Study area	100 Square metres
Site coordinates	TQ 3603 8195 51.519568087708 -0.039157970335
Lat/Long Datum	51 31 10 N 000 02 20 W Point
	Unknown

### Project creators

Name of Organisation	Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited
Project brief originator	Consultant
Project design originator	Chris Mayo
Project director/manager	Chris Mayo
Project supervisor	James Langthorne
Type of sponsor/funding body	Developer
Name of sponsor/funding body	Brook Williams Group

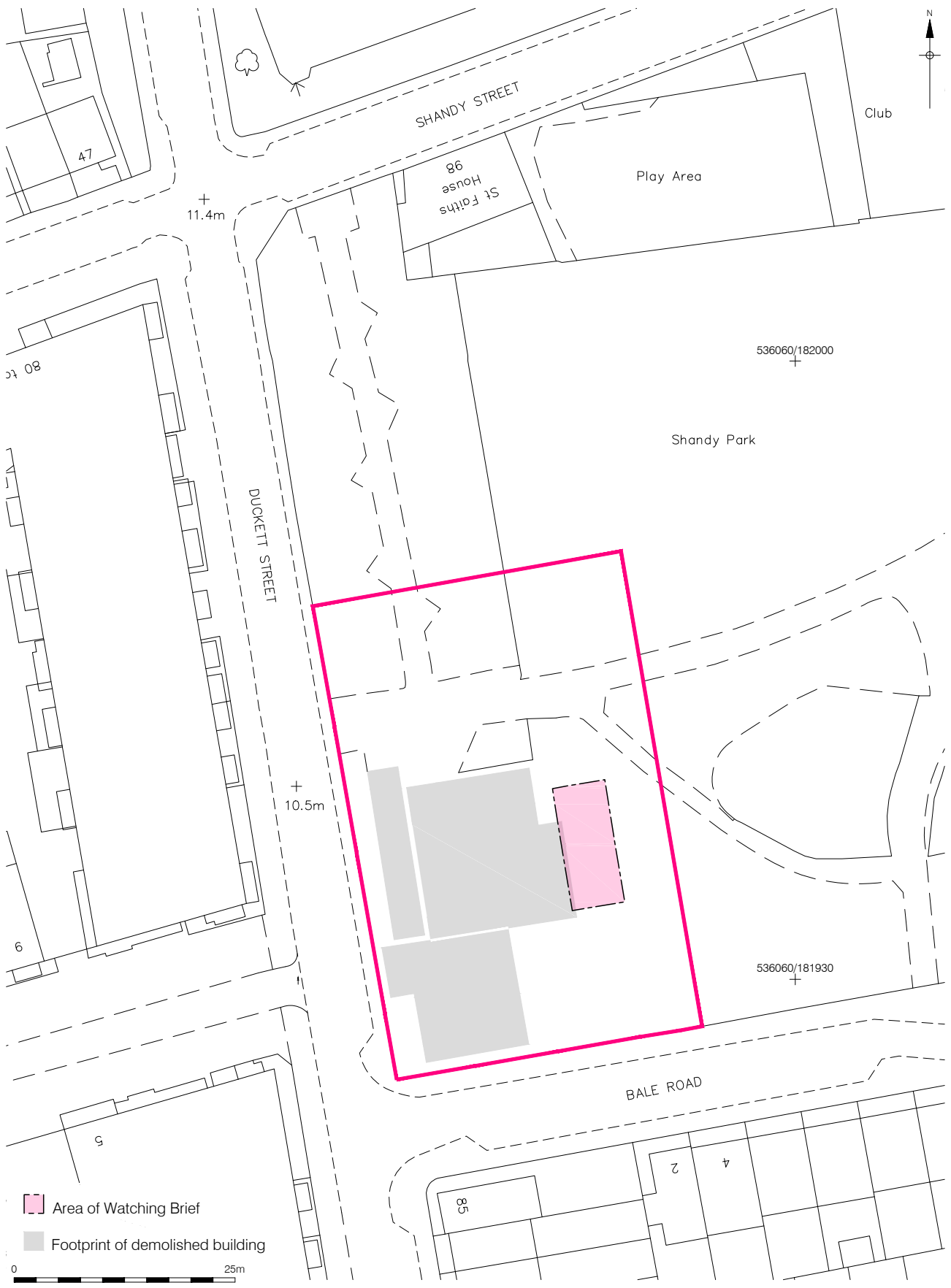
### Project archives

Physical Archive Exists?	No
Digital Archive recipient	LAARC
Digital Archive ID	DUC17
Digital Contents	"Stratigraphic"
Digital Media available	"Images raster / digital photography", "Images vector", "Spreadsheets", "Text"
Paper Archive recipient	LAARC
Paper Archive ID	DUC17

Paper Contents	"Stratigraphic"
Paper Media available	"Context sheet", "Plan", "Section", "Survey "
Project bibliography 1	
Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
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Entered by	Chris Mayo (cmayo@pre-construct.com)
Entered on	02-Mar-17

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Area of Watching Brief  
 Footprint of demolished building

0 25m

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 06/03/17 HB

Figure 1  
 Area of Watching Brief  
 1:625 at A4

# PCA

## **PCA SOUTH**

UNIT 54  
BROCKLEY CROSS BUSINESS CENTRE  
96 ENDWELL ROAD  
BROCKLEY  
LONDON SE4 2PD  
TEL: 020 7732 3925 / 020 7639 9091  
FAX: 020 7639 9588  
EMAIL: [info@pre-construct.com](mailto:info@pre-construct.com)

## **PCA NORTH**

UNIT 19A  
TURSDALE BUSINESS PARK  
DURHAM DH6 5PG  
TEL: 0191 377 1111  
FAX: 0191 377 0101  
EMAIL: [info.north@pre-construct.com](mailto:info.north@pre-construct.com)

## **PCA CENTRAL**

THE GRANARY, RECTORY FARM  
BREWERY ROAD, PAMPISFORD  
CAMBRIDGESHIRE CB22 3EN  
TEL: 01223 845 522  
FAX: 01223 845 522  
EMAIL: [info.central@pre-construct.com](mailto:info.central@pre-construct.com)

## **PCA WEST**

BLOCK 4  
CHILCOMB HOUSE  
CHILCOMB LANE  
WINCHESTER  
HAMPSHIRE SO23 8RB  
TEL: 01962 849 549  
EMAIL: [info.west@pre-construct.com](mailto:info.west@pre-construct.com)

## **PCA MIDLANDS**

17-19 KETTERING RD  
LITTLE BOWDEN  
MARKET HARBOROUGH  
LEICESTERSHIRE LE16 8AN  
TEL: 01858 468 333  
EMAIL: [info.midlands@pre-construct.com](mailto:info.midlands@pre-construct.com)

