An Archaeological Watching Brief on the Western Stables at King's Cross Goods Yard, Wharf Road, Off York Way, London Borough of Camden, N1 0UZ.

Central National Grid Reference: TQ 3017 8361

Written and Researched by Tom O'Gorman

Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited, July 2007

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1 ABSTRACT

1.1 This report details the results of an archaeological watching brief undertaken within the stables, under the Western Transit Shed at the Eastern Goods Yard, as part of the major Kings Cross Central regeneration development scheme. The site was monitored during the clearance of demolition rubble from the stables. The site is centred at National Grid Reference TQ 3017 8361. The project was commissioned by IHCM Limited on behalf of Argent (King's Cross) Limited. Pre-Construct Archaeology undertook the fieldwork between 8th May and 24th May 2007.

1.2 The development area consists of the mid-nineteenth century Granary complex and Goods Yard, north of King's Cross Station, off York Way. There are two sets of subterranean stables; one to the east of the Granary, one to the west. The western stables measure roughly 10m in width, running for a length of approximately 100m, beneath the middle and south end of the Western Transit Shed. The watching brief consisted of the observation of clearance of demolition rubble from within the stables, a preliminary appreciation of the stables structure, the production of photographic and sketched records of recovered artefacts contemporary with the original function of the stables, and the recording of subsequent modifications to the layout and usage of the structure.

1.3 The demolition rubble was cleared in order to provide a clear and safe pathway from one end of the stables to the other, so they could be surveyed as part of the scheme design development.

1.4 The watching brief identified a number of original, 19th-century features within the stables. These include cast iron troughs, cobbled flooring, drainage gullies, an access ramp and a brick arched tunnel.

1.5 Later alterations to the use and layout of the stables were identified, including subdivision of large parts of the stables into smaller compartments, which may be related to the use of the stables as a bomb shelter during World War II.

2 INTRODUCTION

2.1 An archaeological watching brief was conducted by Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited within the Western Transit Shed stables at the Eastern Goods Yard, between 8th and 24th May 2007. The project was commissioned by IHCM Limited on behalf of Argent (King's Cross) Limited. The site was project managed for Pre-Construct Archaeology by Alex-Rose-Deacon and supervised by the author. The clearance and demolition work was undertaken by Pectel, through Carillion.

2.2 The Goods Yard is bounded to the north by industrial land, to the east by York Way, to the south by Wharf Road, and to the west by the Eastern Coal Drops.

2.3 The National Grid Reference of the site is TQ 3017 8361.

2.4 The site has been assigned the code KXC - 06.

2.5 The stables measure roughly 100m x 10m x 3.7m, and it was estimated that they contained 500 tonnes of demolition rubble, occupation waste and general refuse, which was to be excavated by a Bobcat Machine and a 360 degree mini-excavator. The demolition rubble was cleared in order to provide a clear and safe pathway from one end of the stables to the other.

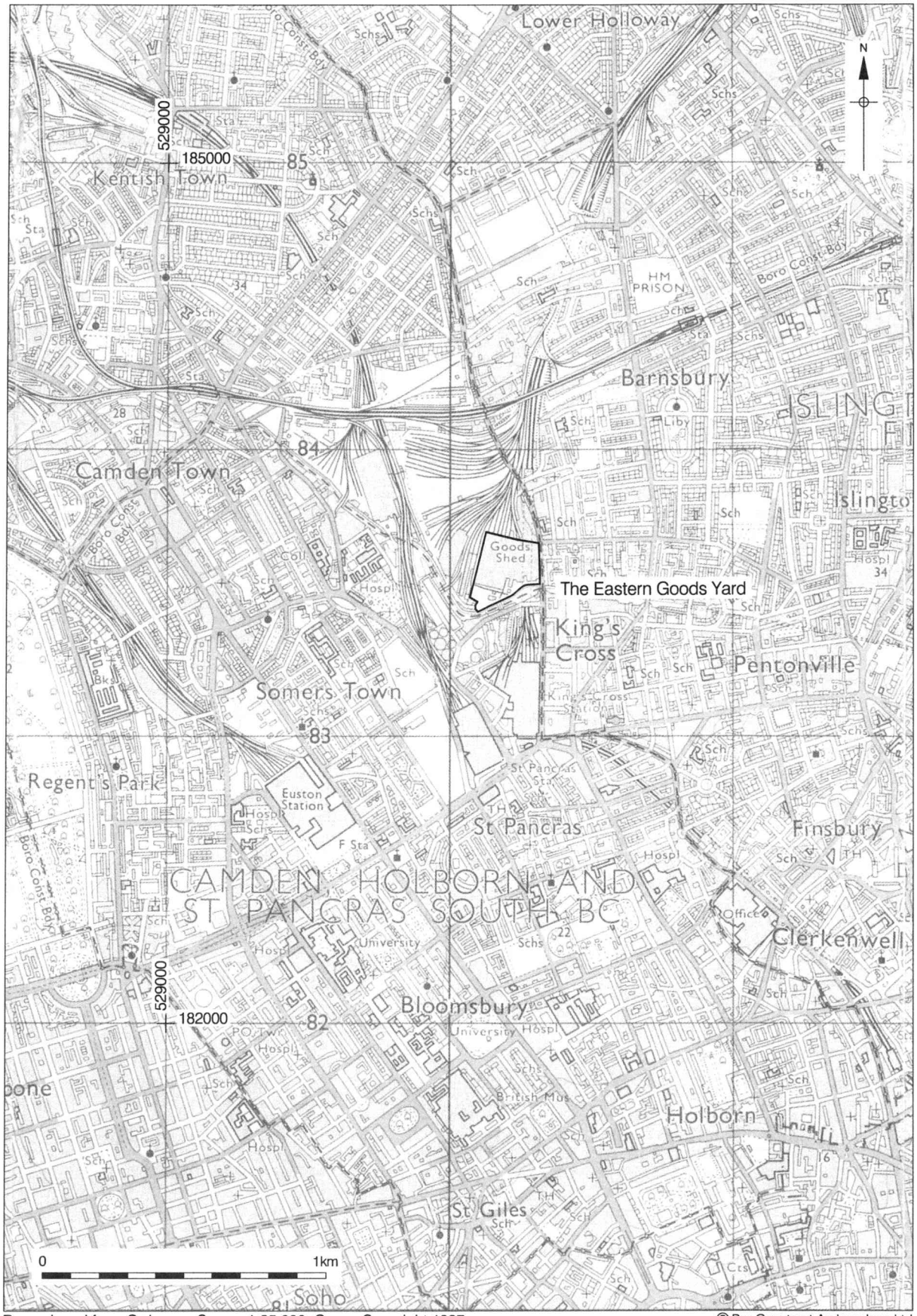

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Figure 1
Site Location
1:20,000 at A4

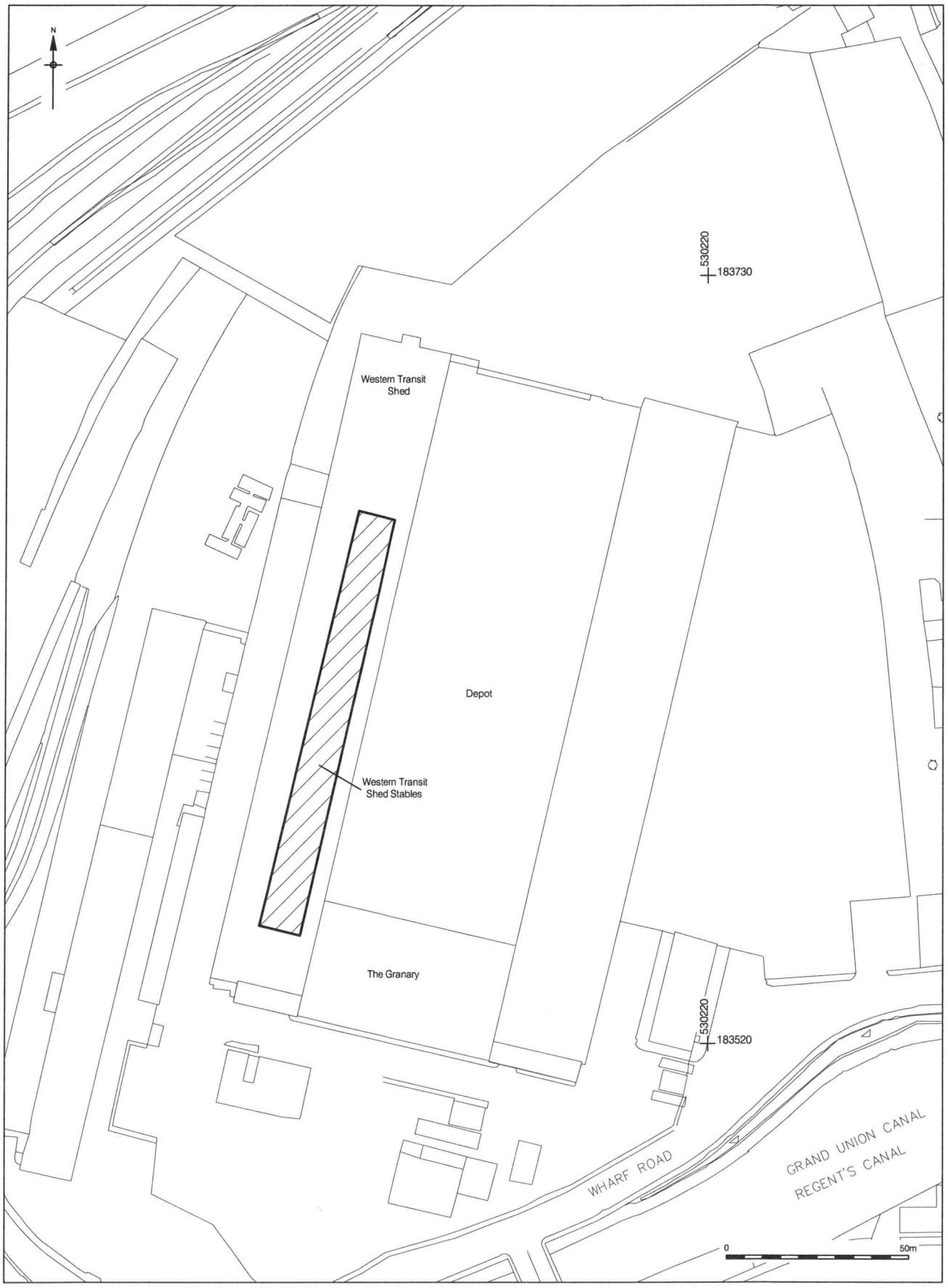

Figure 2
Area of Watching Brief
1:1,500 at A4

3 PLANNING BACKGROUND

3.1 In September 1994 the Department of the Environment issued Planning Policy Guidance Note 15 (PPG15) "Planning and the Historic Environment" providing guidance for planning authorities, property owners, developers and others on the preservation and investigation of archaeological remains.

3.2 In considering any planning application for development, the local planning authority is bound by the policy framework set by government guidance, in this instance PPG15, by current Structure and Local Plan policy and by other material.

3.3 The relevant Development Plan framework is provided by the Camden Unitary Development Plan. The Camden Replacement Unitary Development Plan (2006) states:

B6 - Listed Buildings

To preserve or enhance the character of listed buildings as buildings of special architectural or historic interest, the Council will only grant listed building consent for:

a) the total or substantial demolition of a listed building where exceptional circumstances are shown that outweigh the case for retention; and for

b) alterations and extensions to a listed building where it considers this would not cause harm to the special interest of the building. The Council will only grant planning permission for the change of use of a listed building where it considers this would not cause harm to its special architectural or historic interest. The Council will not grant planning permission for development that it considers would cause harm to the setting of a listed building.

3.55 There needs to be effective protection for all aspects of our historic environment. Listed buildings, conservation areas, our archaeological heritage and strategic and important local views require protection to ensure that the special values they bring to the Borough are not harmed or lost. They form an irreplaceable record that contributes to our understanding of both the present and the past and therefore have a central role to play in our cultural heritage and national identity. Their presence adds to the quality of our lives by enhancing the familiar and valued local environment and sustaining the sense of local distinctiveness that is such an important aspect of the character and appearance of our built environment.

3.56 Camden's listed buildings provide a rich and unique historic and architectural legacy that need to be preserved and maintained for present and future.

generations. There are nearly 6,000 buildings and structures in Camden that are on the statutory list for their special architectural or historic interest.

3.57 The Council has a general presumption in favour of the preservation of listed buildings. Total demolition, substantial demolition and rebuilding behind the façade of a listed building will not normally be considered acceptable. The matters which will be taken into consideration in an application for the total or substantial demolition of a listed building are those set out in paragraphs 3.5 and 3.19 of Planning Policy Guidance (PPG) 15 - Planning and the Historic Environment.

3.58 In order to protect listed buildings, the Council will control external and internal works that affect their special architectural or historic interest and character. Consent is required for any alterations, including some repairs, which would affect the character of a listed building. The matters which will be taken into consideration in an application for alterations and extensions to a listed building are those set out in paragraphs 3.5, 3.12 - 3.15 and Annex C: Guidance on Alterations to Listed Buildings of PPG15. Where listed buildings are being altered for the provision of access for people with disabilities, the Council will balance their needs with the interests of conservation and preservation (see policy SD1C). The listed nature of a building does not preclude the development of inclusive design solutions, and where possible access for all to, and within, listed buildings should be created.

3.59 The best way of securing the upkeep of historic buildings is to keep them in active use. The best use for a historic building is usually the use for which the building was originally designed, and wherever possible this should continue or be reintroduced if at all possible. When a building erected for a need that no longer exists becomes vacant, appropriate alternative uses will be considered to secure the survival of the building. In all cases, the Council will consider whether a proposed change of use, and the subsequent alterations the new use may require, will preserve the character of the listed building as one of special architectural or historic interest. Proposals that would cause harm to the special interests of a building, for example through the loss of important architectural features, changes to the original plan form, layout or structural integrity of the building will be resisted, unless there are other overriding considerations. Proposals that reduce the energy consumption of listed buildings will be welcomed provided that they do not cause harm to the special architectural and historic interest and character of the building or group of buildings concerned.

3.60 The setting of a listed building is of great importance and should not be harmed by unsympathetic neighbouring development. While the setting of a listed building may be limited to its immediate surroundings, it often can extend some distance from it. The value of a listed building can be greatly diminished if unsympathetic development nearby harms its appearance or its harmonious relationship with its surroundings.

3.61 Applicants will be expected to provide sufficient information about the proposed development and its immediate setting, in the form of a design statement, to enable the Council to assess how the listed building is preserved or enhanced. Supplementary guidance provides further information on listed buildings. Reference should also be made to the English Heritage publication 'The Repair of Historic Buildings: Advice on Principles and Methods' (1995). Other specialist leaflets on the repair, conservation and management of listed buildings are also available from English Heritage.

3.62 It is essential that applications for listed building consent should be sufficiently detailed to allow the Council to understand the impact of the proposals upon the special architectural or historic interest and character of the building and on its setting. Applications should specify the grade of listing and explain why the works are necessary. The following types of drawing are likely to be required: a site plan; floor plans; elevations; sections; details of new or replacement architectural details; and, where appropriate, perspectives. Supporting information might include photographs; structural engineering information; a repairs schedule; or, for major refurbishments and complex building works, a historical analysis.

3.63 Where a listed building is considered to be at risk due to its deteriorating condition, vacancy or uncertain future, the Council will use its powers to secure the necessary repairs. Where proposals for enabling development are submitted that affect heritage assets then full regard will be had to English Heritage's policy statement and practical guide to assessment 'Enabling development and the conservation of heritage assets' (2001).

4 GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY

4.1 The British Geological Survey map 256 of the area (1:50,000 series) indicates that the King's Cross site is underlain by London Clay. The Woolwich & Reading Formation, Thanet Formation and Upper Chalk underlie this.

4.2 To the south of the site lies the Regent's Canal, a man-made waterway running east-west. There are no other man-made or natural waterways within or in the immediate vicinity of the site.

5 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

5.1 GENERAL OVERVIEW

An archaeological desk based assessment was prepared by IHCM for Argent (King's Cross) Limited prior to the archaeological fieldwork. The following represents a summary of the recent historical background to the site, as represented within this document. A dearth of evidence, in terms of finds or sites, pertaining to pre-industrial periods exists for this area, despite a great deal of ground works and archaeological monitoring in recent years. It appears that C19th and C20th redevelopment of the area has truncated much of the evidence for these early periods, in some instances impacting underlying natural soils.

5.2 INDUSTRIAL (1750-1900)

5.2.1 The previously open landscape of the study area during the C18th altered drastically with the urbanisation of London. King's Cross began to be utilised for quarrying and the manufacture of brick and tile; the construction of the Regent's Canal in 1820 facilitated yet further commercial development. A major gas manufacturing works was constructed to the south of the canal, with additional terraced housing and smaller commercial properties. Further industrialisation resulted from the construction of railway termini at King's Cross and then St. Pancras, with associated hotels, sidings, maintenance depots and goods handling sheds.

5.2.2 Documentary sources reveal the construction of the Great Northern Railway steam locomotive shed at c1850, to the north of the Goods Yard, in addition to the Midland Railway Roundhouse at c1860. The canalside boundary wall, currently bordering Wharf Road, was constructed c1850 and included an arched opening in the wall to accommodate the canal inlet leading to the Granary basin. This was bricked up during the 1920s after the basin had gone out of use, with the associated towpath bridge over the entrance demolished. A greater part of the arch was later dismantled during preparatory work for a temporary road haul bridge in late 2001 as part of the CTRL works at St Pancras.

5.2.3 The Granary is a large six-storey brick building, designed by Lewis Cubitt and built 1851-2. Some 55 m by 30 m on plan, and 21 m in height. Located symmetrically between the Eastern and Western Transit Sheds and structurally integrated with them. Two east-west hipped roofs with composite timber and cast iron trusses, with wrought iron strapping. Elevations of purple stock brick with yellow surfaces. On the ground floor three transverse railway lines were connected by wagon turntables to

two tracks leading from the Train Assembly Shed (qv) and to the single tracks in the Eastern (arrival) and Western (departure) Transit Sheds. Goods were loaded and unloaded onto platforms along the north and south sides of the building. Two canal docks penetrated beneath the building from the Granary Basin to the south, with canal barges being loaded and unloaded through large trapdoors in the platforms. There were two further canal docks, one either side of the Granary, passing under the later flanking offices and beneath the southern ends of the Transit Sheds.

5.2.4 The stables structure were used:

- As housing for horses, employed to move goods and wagons around the granary complex,
- As a WWII bomb shelter, and
- As a storage facility for a theatre company, during the 1950s and 1960s.

When they were first constructed the stables worked in conjunction with the stables under the Eastern Transit Shed and Wharf Road, westwards from the Coal and Fish Offices.

5.3 MODERN (1900- PRESENT)

5.8.1 The most significant change to the area resulted from the demise of the gas industry, followed by the railway yards. This led to the demolition and subsequent reconstruction of large areas, including the construction of new housing estates and the British Library, and the establishment of the Camley Street natural park along the south bank of the Regent's Canal. More recently, works for CTRL and LUL have altered and truncated the previous industrial landscape.

6 ARCHAEOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY

6.1 In order to enter the stables two access points had to be created by breaking through a concrete slab, which overlay the western side of the stables.

6.2 A scaffold stairway was erected through the smaller of the two access points to allow on-site staff and visitors access to the stables.

6.3 A Bobcat machine was lowered though the larger access point. This was then used to transfer rubble from elsewhere within the stables to underneath the larger access point, where it was removed and transferred to grab-lorries by a 360 degree excavator.

6.4 Whilst the clearance of the rubble, from the stables was being undertaken the site was considered an enclosed space, which required PPE and working conditions, which were reflective of this situation.

6.5 It was required that all non-ceramic materials be separated from ceramic materials, in order to allow the later to be recycled more efficiently.

6.6 All historic artefacts were also separated in order to allow for their subsequent recording (sketches and photography). The historic artefacts have been retained by Argent.

6.7 Schedule of Outputs included:

- Observational notes on the stable structure and the way in which the building functioned
- Sketch drawings of the stable structure, cast iron columns, iron railway sleeper spike/pin, iron tie rods, railway sleepers, kerb stones and an iron chain.
- Drawings of a theatre lamp, cast iron weights, cast iron pulleys and cast iron troughs.
- Photographs of stable structure and historical artefacts.

7 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

7.1 Clearance Material

7.1.1 It was observed that the bulk of the clearance material was red stock brick, granite and sandstone. These relate to the demolition of the western half of the stables' arches, which were replaced by a steel column and I-Beam frame, in order to support a concrete slab above. This enabled the floor working area of the Western Transit Shed above the stables to be extended eastward.

7.1.2 Concrete also formed a proportion of the clearance material. This was especially prevalent at the southern end of the stables. Here the entire upper portion of the stables' arches had been demolished and covered by a concrete slab, which constitutes the loading bay area for the DHL Storage Unit. At this point the rubble infill of the stables was dense, possibly with the intention of providing extra support for vehicles in the loading bay area above.

7.1.3 A high number of decaying, timber railway sleepers were removed from the stables. These are probably contemporary with the transit shed's original function, and once formed part of the extensive network of railway tracks which were located within and around the shed.

7.1.4 General waste and refuse made up only a small percentage of the infill material.

7.2 Theatre Usage

7.2.1 During the 1950s and 1960s, and prior to their partial demolition and infilling, the stables were used by a theatre company as a storage facility. A number of artefacts reflecting this period were recovered. These included props, such as bird cages, wall mountings, fake fruit and set panels, as well as more general objects relating to the running of the theatre, such as cheques and ledgers.

7.2.2 Gin, whisky, brandy and a number of other bottles were found, along with a few small pieces of pottery. The provenance of these is unclear, but it is certain that they are twentieth century in date, and therefore may also have been used by the theatre as props.

Plate 1 – Stables' Arches and Steel Girder Frame

7.3 World War II

7.3.1 Clearance of the stables revealed that at some point after their initial construction they had been divided up into multiple rooms, through the installation of cement breezeblock walls. A number of these had to be demolished in order to allow access to the infill material in all areas of the stables, although where they encased the original cast iron column supports care was taken not to disturb these areas and undermine the structural integrity of the stables.

7.3.2 On further analysis of the stables and the area surrounding the transit shed it was concluded that these breezeblock walls represented a period when the stables were used as a bomb shelter, most likely during WWII.

7.4 The Stables

7.4.1 Clearance of the stables revealed that they were divided up into equally sized, jack-arched bays, each approximately 9.8m across by 3.8m wide. The arches, which are constructed of red stock bricks, are supported by cast iron, cylindrical columns. Two rows of these columns would have run the length of the stables, but the western row was removed when the western half of the arches were demolished. Approximately 1m above floor level, on either side of the bays, cast iron brackets protrude from the wall. These probably carried cast iron troughs, but had been broken off in order to allow for the removal of the troughs.

7.4.2 Although still covered in rubble, the northern access ramp, from the transit shed into the stables, was identified. The brick arch tunnel, which links the stables to Eastern Coal Drops at the west of the site, was also cleared.

7.4.3 The only area which was clear of infill was the southernmost bay of the stables, where remnants of hay were identified. Here a cast iron trough was found still attached to the west and east wall. A wooden bed was discovered in this area, although it is uncertain whether this is contemporary with the original function of the stables. On the southern wall a circular line of bricks denotes the northern limit of a 'canal pipe'. Around this five rectangular sockets, into which timber beams may have been inserted, can clearly be seen.

7.4.4 The floor is comprised almost entirely of cobbles, although some areas of dirt flooring are visible. Two small gullies run the length of the stables, at ground level, and are thought to have acted as a drainage system.

7.4.5 A number of artefacts, which are probably contemporary with the original function of the stables, were recovered from the infill. Most notable of these were three partial, cast iron troughs and a set of cast iron weights. Although it is uncertain, it is possible that the latter was part of a pulley system designed to keep internal stable doors shut, in order to prevent horses from wandering.

7.4.6 Other artefacts include a cast iron chain, partial cast iron column supports for the arches, a cast iron fireplace, wrought iron tie rods, cast iron rings and cast iron pulleys.

7.4.7 The artefacts have been retained by Argent

8 INTERPRETATIONS AND CONLUSIONS

8.1 The rubble infill of the stables was comprised primarily of red stock brick, granite and sandstone and was interpreted as being the demolition rubble created when the upper portion of the western half of the stables' arches were demolished in order to install the steel column and I-beam frame that is now in place.

8.2 The stables have undergone a number of usage changes since their construction. Originally used to house horses, which would have hauled wagons in the transit shed and along the railway lines, it was converted into a bomb shelter around the time of the WWII by the insertion of numerous cement breezeblock walls, before finally being used by a theatre company for storage.

8.3 Drawings, illustrations of the artefacts (as scheduled in section 6) and photographs of the stables will be produced in a P.C.A. report following a commission to thoroughly document the buildings, stables and landscape of the Eastern Goods Shed.

9 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

9.1 The author and PCA Ltd would like to thank Argent (King's Cross) Limited for commissioning the work. Thanks to Richard Hughes of IHCM for his assistance.

9.2 The author would like to thank Alex Rose-Deacon for her project management, Gary Brown for editing and Alastair Mitchell and Pectel Group for their on-site co-operation.

10 BIBLIOGRAPHY

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OASIS ID: preconst1-32007

Project details

Project name	Western Stables, King's Cross Goods Yard
Short description of the project	An Archaeological watching brief on the Western Stables at King's Cross Goods Yard, Wharf Road, off York Way, London Borough of Camden, N1 0UZ. The project consisted of overseeing the removal of demolition rubble and occupation material from the western stables under the Western Transit Shed at the Eastern Goods Yard, as part of the major King's Cross central regeneration development scheme.
Project dates	Start: 14-05-2007 End: 31-05-2007
Previous/future work	Not known / Yes
Type of project	Building Recording
Site status	Listed Building
Current Land use	Industry and Commerce 1 - Industrial
Monument type	STABLES Post Medieval
Significant Finds	IRON TROUGHS, WEIGHTS, CHAINS AND PULLEYS Post Medieval
Methods & techniques	'Annotated Sketch','Survey/Recording Of Fabric/Structure'
Prompt	Listed Building Consent

Project location

Country	England
Site location	GREATER LONDON CAMDEN CAMDEN Western Stables, King's Cross Goods Yard
Postcode	N1 0UZ
Study area	1000.00 Square metres
Site coordinates	TQ 3017 8361 51.5358715065 -0.122965161452 51 32 09 N 000 07 22 W Point

Project creators

Name of Organisation	Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd
Project brief originator	Argent Limited
Project design originator	Richard Hughes

Project director/manager	Alex Rose-Deacon
Project supervisor	Tom O'Gorman
Type of sponsor/funding body	Commercial Developer
Name of sponsor/funding body	Argent Limited

Project archives

Physical Archive Exists?	No
Digital Archive Exists?	No
Digital Contents	'none'
Digital Media available	'Text'
Paper Archive recipient	Greater London SMR, British Library, NMR and local library
Paper Contents	'none'
Paper Media available	'Diary','Drawing','Map','Photograph','Report'

Project bibliography 1

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