

**An Archaeological Watching Brief at King's Cross Central – Pancras
Road Realignment, London Borough of Camden**

Site Code: PNK 07

Central National Grid Reference: TQ 3009 8312

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August 2007

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August 2007

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Archaeological Watching Brief

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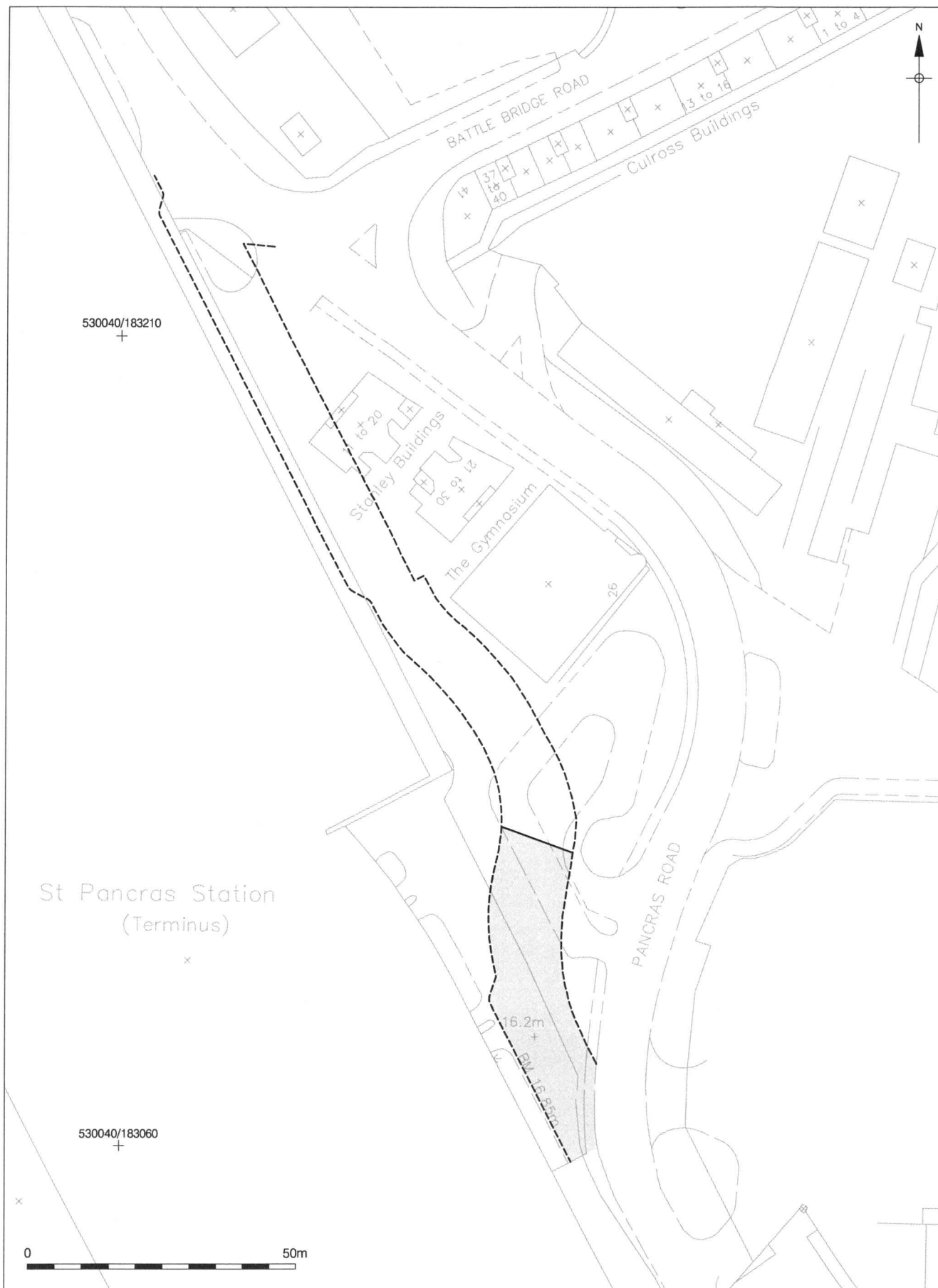
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1 ABSTRACT

- 1.1 This report details the results and working methods of an archaeological watching brief carried out on ground reduction at King's Cross Central, Pancras Road, as part of a ground and existing structures investigation during the realignment of Pancras Road. The watching brief was commissioned by Edmund Nuttall Ltd and Barhale Construction Ltd on behalf of Argent (King's Cross) Ltd. and took place intermittently between 15th June and 19th July 2007. This was one of a series of watching briefs to support the designs of King's Cross Central, in response to Camden planning requirements.
- 1.2 Natural geology was recorded across the site, consisting of a blue-grey/orange-brown gravelly clay. This was heavily truncated by late 19th century and modern 20th century redevelopments to the study site. A 19th century culvert, plus contemporary footings and external wall were observed in close proximity to the still extant German Gymnasium. The external wall is believed to demarcate the original frontage of this construction. All deposits were sealed by 20th century made ground and resurfacing layers. All recorded deposits suggest large-scale redevelopment of the area during 19th and 20th centuries.

2 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 An archaeological watching brief was undertaken during the ground reduction phase of the realignment of Pancras Road, King's Cross, London Borough of Camden. The project was monitored intermittently between 15th June and 24th July 2007 by Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited, at King's Cross Central (figure 1). This was one of a series of watching briefs supporting the designs of King's Cross Central in response to London Borough of Camden planning requirements.
- 2.2 The area under investigation consists of a roughly triangular strip, bounded to the west by St. Pancras Railway station, and Pancras Road to the east, north and south. King's Cross Station lies to the east of the area with Euston Road to the south. The area under investigation also includes the length of Pancras Road, predominantly the western border, its southern limit being demarcated by Euston Road, and northern limit defined by Goods Way. The subject site is located within the King's Cross St. Pancras Conservation Area.
- 2.3 The site is located at National Grid Reference TQ 3009 8312.
- 2.4 The maximum depth of ground reduction was approximately 1m in road resurfacing areas, 2.5m to 4m in roadside service areas, and up to 5m in areas cleared for manhole access. The initial road stripping and service trenches were observed as an archaeological watching brief.
- 2.5 The work was programmed to continue to the north of the area monitored (Figure 2). However, Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited was not requested to monitor the ground reduction work in this area.
- 2.6 Edmund Nuttall Ltd and Barhale Construction Ltd, on behalf of Argent (King's Cross) Ltd commissioned the work. The project was managed for Pre-Construct Archaeology by Gary Brown and supervised by the author, Guy Seddon and Richard Humphrey.
- 2.7 The site was assigned the code PNK 07.



----- proposed route of Pancras Road realignment
 □ Area of Watching Brief

Figure 1
 St Pancras Road
 Area of Watching Brief and new road alignment
 1:1,000 at A4

3 PLANNING BACKGROUND

- 3.1 In November 1990 the Department of the Environment issued Planning Policy Guidance Note 16 (PPG16) "Archaeology and Planning" 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 PPG16, 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:

B8 – ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES AND MONUMENTS

A – SITES AND MONUMENTS OF NATIONAL ARCHAEOLOGICAL IMPORTANCE:

WHEN CONSIDERING DEVELOPMENT CLOSE TO SITES AND MONUMENTS OF NATIONAL ARCHAEOLOGICAL IMPORTANCE, INCLUDING SCHEDULED ANCIENT MONUMENTS, THE COUNCIL WILL SEEK THE PHYSICAL PRESERVATION OF THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL FEATURES AND THEIR SETTINGS.

B – SITES AND MONUMENTS OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL IMPORTANCE:

THE COUNCIL WILL ONLY GRANT CONSENT FOR DEVELOPMENT WHERE ACCEPTABLE MEASURES ARE UNDERTAKEN TO PRESERVE REMAINS OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL IMPORTANCE AND THEIR SETTINGS. DEVELOPERS SHOULD ADOPT MEASURES THAT ALLOW SUCH REMAINS TO BE PERMANENTLY PRESERVED IN SITU. WHERE THIS CANNOT BE ACHIEVED, NO DEVELOPMENT SHALL TAKE PLACE UNTIL SATISFACTORY EXCAVATION AND RECORDING OF THE REMAINS HAS BEEN CARRIED OUT.

- 3.4 Also of relevance is local policy KC11:

KC11 - HERITAGE

THE COUNCIL WILL GRANT PLANNING PERMISSION FOR DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS FOR THE KING'S CROSS OPPORTUNITY AREA, WHICH SEEK TO ENSURE THAT:

A) PRESERVE LISTED BUILDINGS OR STRUCTURES AND THEIR SETTING

B) PRESERVE OR ENHANCE BUILDINGS. STRUCTURES AND OTHER FEATURES OF CHARACTER AND HISTORIC INTEREST, AND THEIR SETTING, WITHIN THE CONSERVATION AREAS

C) PRESERVE THE REMAINS OF SIGNIFICANT ARCHAEOLOGICAL IMPORTANCE AND THEIR SETTINGS.

9.67

The Opportunity Area has a diverse and unique character with a distinct sense of place. It is of outstanding national, architectural, historical and industrial archaeological importance. Because the Opportunity Area contains one of the more important and complete Industrial Archaeology sites in the country, this is an area of archaeological potential. The St Pancras Archaeological Priority Area is also partly located within the Opportunity Area. The Council will require development to meet the requirements set out in policy B8A and B8B on archaeology and of PPG16.

9.69

Heritage buildings and features are a positive asset. Re-using heritage buildings and bringing disused properties into use is an integral part of the sustainable regeneration of the area. Furthermore, redevelopment may provide the opportunity to salvage and re-use historic items of streetscape and street furniture on the site. Developers will have to demonstrate the balance between the protection of heritage buildings against other social and economic considerations to fulfill wider policy objectives and, as such, to justify any proposal for the removal of heritage buildings and other features in the context of PPG16.

9.70

The Regent's Canal is of strategic importance and is a key feature of the King's Cross Opportunity Area. Specific policies relating to Regent's Canal are contained in section 10. It is important that the redevelopment of the area captures the potential that the Canal offers. In particular the Council will seek development that achieves a successful balance of:

- the protection of the historic canal environment
- the enhancement of the canal's biodiversity

- access to and along the canal for pedestrians
- the use of the canal for recreation
- the use of the canal for transportation, especially during the construction of development

3.5 The study site is located within the King's Cross Opportunity area as defined by the local authority.

4 GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY

- 4.1 British Geological Survey map 256 of the area (1:50,000 series) indicates that the King's Cross site is underlain by London Clay.
- 4.2 Natural clay was revealed at heights of between 14.56m OD and 15.77m OD. The site is generally flat, with ground level being recorded at around 16.80m OD across the areas being investigated.
- 4.3 The site lies in close proximity to the projected path of the former River Fleet. The Fleet crossed below the Regent's Canal, and continued from north of Camden Town, past old St Pancras Church and through the Brill area, King's Cross¹.

¹ Barton, 1982, p27

5 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

GENERAL OVERVIEW

- 5.1 A specialist archaeological report was prepared by Archaeological Consultancy IHCM for Argent (King's Cross) Ltd. prior to the archaeological fieldwork. The following represents a summary of the archaeological and historical background to the site, as represented within this document, including a summary of past fieldwork in the vicinity. It appears that 19th and 20th century redevelopment of the study area has truncated much of the evidence for earlier, pre-industrial periods, in some instances impacting underlying natural soils.

PREHISTORIC (450,000 BC – AD 43)

- 5.2 The King's Cross Central site is generally located on London Clay. The poorer drainage associated with this soil would therefore not have been as attractive for occupation by early settlers as in surrounding areas. Furthermore, any gravel deposits likely to yield material such as flint axes of this date, as have been produced elsewhere in London, have eroded away. No SMR entries relating to this period were noted in the vicinity of the site.

ROMAN (AD 43 – 410)

- 5.3 The study site lies approximately 2km north-west of *Londinium*. Founded within a decade of the arrival of the Romans in AD 43, the city flourished during the 1st and early 2nd centuries. The city contracted in the 3rd and 4th centuries, becoming much less densely populated, inhabited by the wealthy and influential, and was finally abandoned in the early 5th century following the Roman withdrawal from Britain.
- 5.4 A number of finds relating to this period are noted in the proximity of the site. These include a road [SMR 080540] to the east along York Way, and finds of an iron urn [SMR 080365], and a tombstone [SMR 080382], deriving from Wharfdale Road, also to the east of the study site.

EARLY-MID SAXON (AD 410 – C9th)

- 5.5 Little evidence pertaining to the general character of the area in this period exists. A possible settlement [SMR 082063] is documented from the Old St Pancras graveyard, in addition to a 6th or 7th century altar [SMR 081792] from the same location.

LATE SAXON-MEDIEVAL (C10th – 1485)

- 5.6 The 9th and 10th centuries saw the city becoming increasingly reoccupied, with presumed farming expansion in north London and therefore most probably into King's Cross. Such activities however, may only leave ephemeral traces in the landscape.
- 5.7 The present boundaries of the London boroughs were virtually reached by the 13th centuries, with rural villages existing at St Pancras and Islington. The site itself, according to the Domesday Survey, lay within the Ossulstone Hundred with the land to the west of York Way being in the Prebendal Manor of St Pancras. The medieval settlement around St Pancras church also lay to the west of the study site. The former manorial and parish boundaries correspond with the present York Way, a portion of the King's Cross Central site laying within the manor of Barnsbury, a property held by Hugh de Berners, from the Bishop of London.
- 5.8 Structures from this period were predominantly constructed from timber. High status buildings such as churches often utilised more durable materials such as masonry. Such structures may be used to infer the location of past settlements. St Pancras church [SMR 082053] was located very close to the north of the study site.

POST-MEDIEVAL (AD 1485 – 1750)

- 5.9 The general layout of London did not significantly change during this period, although the population quadrupled in size. Neighbourhoods around Islington, Shoreditch and Clerkenwell began to be occupied by the poor, as the suburbs began to consume districts between the commercial areas and those beyond the city walls.
- 5.10 Map evidence from this period denotes smallpox and fever hospitals north of the Great Northern Hotel, and therefore very close to the study site. Other structures of note include the Brill settlement [SMR 080447], now located beneath St Pancras station, and three burial grounds under the former Goods depot to the west of St Pancras, partly excavated by Pre-Construct Archaeology in 2004.

INDUSTRIAL (1750-1900)

- 5.11 The previously open landscape of the study area during the 18th century drastically altered with the urbanisation of London. The King's Cross area began to be utilised for quarrying and the manufacture of brick and tile; plus 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 derived from the construction of railway termini at King's Cross, completed in 1852, and then St. Pancras, completed c1868, with associated hotels, sidings, maintenance depots and goods handling sheds.

- 5.12 Documentary sources reveal the construction of the Great Northern Railway steam locomotive shed c. 1850, to the north of Goods Yard, in addition to the Midland Railway Roundhouse in c. 1860. The canalside boundary wall, currently bordering Wharf Road, was constructed c. 1850 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.
- 5.13 The German Gymnasium, to the east of the road realignment was constructed between 1864-5, and designed by Edward Gruning. The building was the home of the German Gymnasium Society, which was formed in 1861, and represents the first purpose built public gymnasium in Britain. Shortly after its opening in 1866, the first games by the National Olympian Association were held here, and these continued annually until the first modern Olympic Games were held at White City in West London in 1908. At this time, the lease of the building was bought by the Great Northern Railway to provide additional accommodation for its operations centre, whereupon the building was extended to include a new floor at gallery level to provide further office space. The gymnasium was finally closed in 1914 and was later damaged during an air raid in 1917, which also damaged St Pancras Station.
- 5.14 Other structures of note within the study site were the Stanley Buildings, now demolished. These were constructed by the Improved Industrial Dwelling Company, and were the first structures to utilise balconies for dwellings. These were partly recorded by Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited prior to demolition.
- 5.15 Archaeological evaluations and watching briefs have confirmed the extent to which the study site was redeveloped during the industrial period. Evaluations by Oxford Archaeology and AOC during works for CTRL and LUL observed nothing other than modern and industrial soils, or structural features of a contemporary date. During redevelopment works for King's Cross Underground Station along Euston Road [KXS01]² an icehouse dating to c. 1860 was discovered, post-dating the Great Northern Hotel. In addition the Hotel Curve Tunnel, an underground connection to run local trains to Farringdon was identified. Both icehouse and tunnel were backfilled during the late 20th century.

MODERN (1900- PRESENT)

² Maloney and Holroyd, 2004, p65

- 5.16 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 new housing estates, 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 The areas to be investigated were laid out by the groundwork contractors in accordance with the proposed development plan and verified on-site by representatives from Edmund Nuttall Ltd. All ground reduction was machine excavated and monitored by an archaeologist.
- 6.2 The ground reduction was monitored across the site in order to investigate ground conditions and establish the location of existing structures or any possible obstructions.
- 6.3 Individual descriptions of all archaeological strata and features excavated and/or exposed were entered onto pro-forma recording sheets. All plans and sections of archaeological deposits were recorded on polyester based drawing film, the plans being drawn at a scale of 1:20 and the sections at 1:10. The recording system used was "single context". In addition, a digital photographic record was kept of all features encountered.

7 SUMMARY OF THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SEQUENCE

Phase 1: Natural

- 7.1 Natural ground was observed at 15.77m OD, and comprised a firm orange-brown clayey gravel. This measured approximately 6.00m (E-W) x 40.00m (N-S), and was truncated by features [4] and [9].
- 7.2 During ground reduction for manhole C94, a similar deposit was identified as [12], observed from 14.56m OD. This comprised a firm mid blue-grey/orange-brown clay with moderate inclusions of gravel, measuring 3.00m² x 0.20-0.60m (depth), continuing beyond the limit of observed excavation. The layer appeared to have been heavily truncated both horizontally by modern services and vertically to the south-east during the construction of a similar manhole shaft.

Phase 2: 19th Century

- 7.3 Linear construction cut [4] was identified to the south of the subject site, truncating natural ground from 15.77m OD. This measured 0.75m (E-W) x >8.00m (N-S), its full depth was not ascertained. The feature was interpreted as the construction cut for wall [3]. This feature was identified from 15.77m OD, and measured 0.70m width (E-W) x >8.00m (N-S) x >3.00m (deep), aligned roughly N-S. The wall utilised dark red frogged bricks 224mm x 105mm x 62mm, some of which appeared to be re-used, bonded with a white-yellow sandy mortar. No internal divisions or associated walls were observed, therefore the feature was interpreted as an external wall relating to either foundations or a basement of a 19th century structure. The alignment and orientation of the wall infers that it may represent the original frontage for the German Gymnasium, and therefore the building as it now stands is reduced from its original design. This may have taken place as a consequence of damage caused during the air raids of 1917. Sealing the wall, and filling the construction cut was deposit [5], a dark grey sandy silt containing occasional inclusions of demolition rubble. This deposit extended 0.30m to the west of wall [4].
- 7.4 To the north of feature [3], cut [9] was identified. This linear cut, not fully exposed, was filled by circular culvert [8]. This feature utilised 240mm x 110mm x 60mm red bricks, bonded with very soft lime mortar and was interpreted to be of 19th century date. Feature [9] may be contemporary with the construction of the German Gymnasium which lies just to the east.
- 7.5 To the south of the study site, masonry [10] was identified. This construction utilised red and yellow frogged stock bricks measuring 230mm x 110mm x 60mm, bonded with hard, grey lime mortar, in English bond. This was observed measuring 6.00m (E-

W) x 1.50m (N-S) x at least 1.00m (deep), no further investigations were possible. Feature [10] was interpreted to represent footings for a 19th century structure, and was sealed by modern made ground.

Phase 3: Modern

- 7.6 Deposit [6] sealed [5], and comprised a loose, mid red-brown mixture of demolition material and sand. This abutted wall [3] and was interpreted as modern backfill, it was observed measuring 2.50m (E-W) x 40.00m (N-S).
- 7.7 Sealing natural deposit [12] was made ground layer [11]. This was identified from 15.46m OD and consisted of a loose mid orange-brown coarse sandy gravel with clay lenses. The layer appeared sterile and well sorted with no further inclusions, suggesting a 20th century levelling deposit, and measured 0.90m (depth).
- 7.8 Layers [6], [12] and all other areas investigated were sealed by modern made ground and road surfacing deposits of an approximate depth of 1.00m from around 16.80m OD.

8 INTERPRETATION

- 8.1 Natural gravelly clay was recorded across the site at heights of between 14.56m OD and 15.77m OD. The varying levels testify to the extensive horizontal truncation of natural deposits by modern services and levelling during the remodelling of the area during late 19th and 20th centuries.
- 8.2 Footings were observed which may relate to the original frontage of the German Gymnasium which lies just to the east of the study site. These followed the alignment of the extant building and were therefore interpreted to be of 19th century date. Also, of possible relation to the German Gymnasium was a 19th century culvert identified running NW-SE in close proximity to this construction. Other possible contemporary foundations were observed to the south of this feature and were identified as footings for an unknown 19th century structure, no further information was gained.
- 8.3 All areas observed were sealed by a series of 20th century levelling and made ground deposits. It appears that natural ground has been heavily impacted upon by modern developments and services.

9 CONCLUSIONS

- 9.1 Natural deposits were recorded across parts of the study site, revealing gravelly clay. The watching brief revealed no evidence of archaeological remains for the prehistoric, Roman, Saxon or medieval periods.
- 9.2 Limited evidence was observed for former 19th century structures. It appeared that the area was extensively remodelled during the 20th century. This may be due to the study site's proximity to both St. Pancras and King's Cross Stations and also the area's vulnerability to damage during the air raids of both WWI and WWII.
- 9.3 All deposits were sealed by 20th century made ground and road surfaces. Evidence was observed for modern truncation of natural soils, with instances of 20th century made ground directly overlying natural clay. Therefore, the probability of any future work carried out here impacting archaeological deposits is considered to be low.

10 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- 10.1 Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited would like to thank Edmund Nuttall Ltd and Barhale Construction Ltd for commissioning the project on behalf of Argent (King's Cross) Ltd, with thanks to Richard Hughes of IHCM for his assistance.
- 10.2 The author would like to thank Gary Brown for his project management, Helen Clough for report editing and the illustrations were produced by Hayley Baxter.

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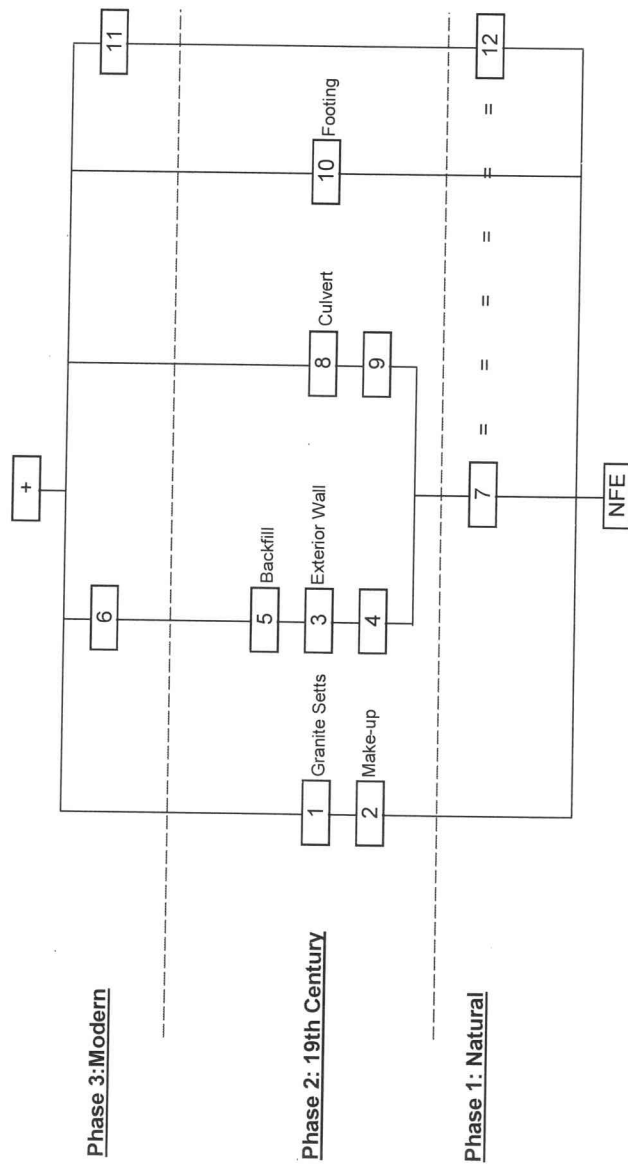
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<http://safety.camden.gov.uk/ccm/content/environment/planning-and-built-environment/development-plans-and-policies/camdens-udp/short-udp-policies/udp-policy-section-9---kings-cross-opportunity-area---area-action-plan.en?page=17>

APPENDIX 1: CONTEXT INDEX

| Context | Trench | Plan | Section | Phase | Type | Description | Highest | Lowest |
|---------|--------|--------|---------|-------|---------|---|---------|--------|
| Number | | Number | Number | | | | | |
| 1 | | | | 2 | Surface | Granite Setts | 16.71 | |
| 2 | | | | 2 | Layer | Red crushed brick made ground | 16.56 | |
| 3 | | | | 2 | Masonry | C19th external wall | 15.77 | |
| 4 | | | | 2 | Cut | Constr cut for wall [3], filled by backfill [5] | 15.77 | |
| 5 | | | | 2 | Fill | Grey sand-silt backfill | 15.77 | |
| 6 | | | | 3 | Layer | Red-brown demo rubble, made ground | 15.77 | |
| 7 | | | | 1 | Layer | Orange-brown clayey gravel: Natural | 15.77 | |
| 8 | | | | 2 | Masonry | C19th Culvert | | |
| 9 | | | | 2 | Cut | Constr cut for [8] | | |
| 10 | | | | 2 | Masonry | C19th footings | | |
| 11 | | | | 3 | Layer | Orange-brown sandy gravel: C20th Made ground | 15.46 | |
| 12 | | | | 1 | Layer | Blue-grey/orange-brown clayey gravel: Natural | 14.56 | |

APPENDIX 2:



APPENDIX 3:

OASIS ID: preconst1-32979

Project details

Project name Pancras Road, King's Cross

Short description of the project A watching brief was carried out on a road realignment at Pancras Road, King's Cross. This was one of a series of watching briefs to support the redesign of King's Cross Central, in response to Camden planning requirements. Natural geology was recorded across the site, consisting of a blue-grey/orange-brown gravelly clay. This was heavily truncated by late 19th century and modern 20th century redevelopments to the study site. A 19th century culvert, plus contemporary footings and external wall were observed in close proximity to the still extant German Gymnasium. The external wall is believed to demarcate the original frontage of this construction. All deposits were sealed by 20th century made ground and resurfacing layers. All recorded deposits suggest large-scale redevelopment of the area during 19th and 20th centuries.

Project dates Start: 15-06-2007 End: 24-07-2007

Previous/future work No / No

Any associated PNK07 - Sitecode
project reference
codes

Type of project Recording project

Site status Area of Archaeological Importance (AAI)

Current Land use Transport and Utilities 1 - Highways and road transport

Monument type CULVERT Post Medieval

Investigation type 'Watching Brief'

Prompt Planning condition

Project location

Country England

Site location GREATER LONDON CAMDEN CAMDEN St Pancras Road,
King's Cross

Postcode NW12QP

Study area 200.00 Square metres

Site coordinates TQ 30090 83120 51.5314860548 -0.124299158444 51 31 53 N
000 07 27 W Point

Height OD Min: 14.56m Max: 15.77m

Project creators

Name of Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd
Organisation

Project brief Consultant
originator

Project design Richard Hughes
originator

Project Helen Clough
director/manager

Project supervisor Amelia Fairman

Type of Edmund Nuttalls Ltd
sponsor/funding
body

Project archives

Physical Archive No
Exists?

Digital Archive LAARC
recipient

Digital Archive ID PNK07

Digital available Media 'Images raster / digital photography',' Text'

Paper recipient Archive LAARC

Paper Archive ID PNK07

Paper available Media 'Notebook - Excavation',' Research',' General
Notes','Plan','Report'

**Project
bibliography 1**

Publication type Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)

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