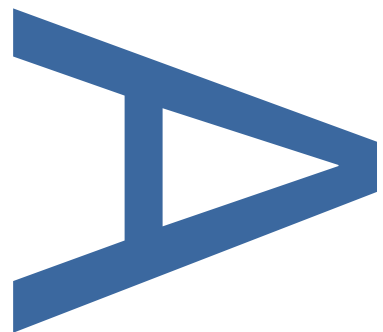
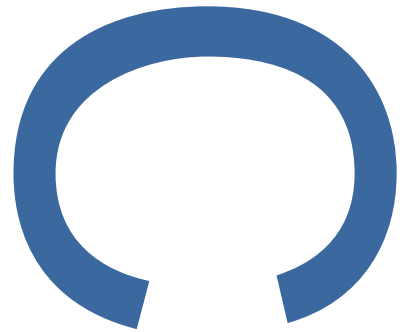


**163 KENSINGTON HIGH STREET,  
ROYAL BOROUGH OF  
KENSINGTON AND CHELSEA  
AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING  
BRIEF**

**SITE CODE: ENS19**

**LOCAL PLANNING AUTHORITY:  
ROYAL BOROUGH OF KENSINGTON  
AND CHELSEA**

**JULY 2019**



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**163 KENSINGTON HIGH STREET, ROYAL BOROUGH OF KENSINGTON AND  
CHELSEA**

**AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF**

---

**Site Code:** ENS19

**Central National Grid Reference:** TQ 2545 7948

**Written by:** Chloe Sinclair  
Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited

**Project Manager:** Helen Hawkins (MCIfA)

**Commissioning Client:** RPS

---

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**July 2019**

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**DOCUMENT VERIFICATION**

**Site Name**

**163 KENSINGTON HIGH STREET, ROYAL BOROUGH OF KENSINGTON**

**AND CHELSEA**

**Type of project**

**An Archaeological Watching Brief**

**Quality Control**

Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited Project Code			K5920
	<b>Name</b>	<b>Signature</b>	<b>Date</b>
Text Prepared by:	C Sinclair		24.7.19
Graphics Prepared by:	R Murphy		24.7.19
Graphics Checked by:	M Roughley	M Roughley	26.7.19
Project Manager Sign-off:	H Hawkins	H Hawkins	26.7.19

Revision No.	Date	Checked	Approved

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## **1 ABSTRACT**

- 1.1 An archaeological watching brief was undertaken at 163 Kensington High Street, Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, W8 6SU. The watching brief was conducted by Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited intermittently between 10th and 28th July 2019. The work was commissioned by RPS.
- 1.2 The watching brief was undertaken in accordance with an approved Written Scheme of Investigation (Hawkins 2019) and was commissioned in response to an archaeological planning condition attached to full planning permission for the proposed scheme.
- 1.3 The works comprised the reduction of ground in two underpinning pits along the southern and western site boundary.
- 1.4 Natural sandy gravel was seen in both areas of investigation directly underlying the basement materials of the current structure.
- 1.5 No evidence of archaeological activity was observed.

## 2 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 An archaeological watching brief was conducted by Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited at 163 Kensington High Street, Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea (Figure 1). The investigation comprised monitoring ground reduction in two underpinning pits. The investigation aimed to record any archaeological material found within the excavation area.
- 2.2 The investigation, commissioned by RPS, was conducted intermittently between 10th and 28th July 2019. The work was supervised by Chloe Sinclair, and managed by Helen Hawkins, of Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited. The archaeological works were monitored on behalf of the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea by Laura O’Gorman of the Greater London Archaeological Advisory Service.
- 2.3 The site was bounded by Kensington High Street to the north, Wrights Lane to the east, Abingdon Villas to the south, and Adam and Eve Mews to the west.
- 2.4 Planning permission (PP/16/05360) was granted for the construction of a one storey mansard roof extension containing 1 x apartment; conversion of 2 x apartments into 4 x apartments; replacement of one storey rear portion of property with 1 x mews house; alterations to ground and basement floor slabs to allow level access from pavement to mews house; improvements to bomb damaged rear elevation; alterations to side access to basement and residential flats above; replacement of lean-to with brick structure to house 1 x eurobin and gas meters; installation, replacement and relocation of retail air handling equipment. The existing basement slab at the rear of the building will be lowered to a finished floor level of 8.88m OD.
- 2.5 An archaeological planning condition was attached to the planning permission:

*Condition 12. Archaeological evaluation*

*A) No development shall take place until the applicant (or their heirs and successors in title) has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological evaluation in accordance with a written scheme which has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority in consultation with the Greater London Archaeological Advisory Service and a report on that evaluation has been submitted to the local planning authority.*

*B) If heritage assets of archaeological interest are identified by the evaluation under Part A, then before the commencement of development (other than demolition to existing ground level) the applicant (or their heirs and successors in title) shall secure the implementation of a programme of archaeological investigation in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation which has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority.*

*C) No development or demolition shall take place other than in accordance with the Written Scheme of Investigation approved under Part (B).*

*D) 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 approved under Part (B), and the provision for analysis, publication and dissemination of the results and archive deposition has been secured.*

*Reason: Heritage assets of archaeological interest may survive on the site. The planning authority wishes to secure the provision of appropriate archaeological investigation, including the publication of results, in accordance with Section 12 of the NPPF and Consolidated Local Plan policy CL4.*

- 2.6 The archaeological work was carried out in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation (Hawkins 2019) approved by the Archaeological Adviser to the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea.
- 2.7 The site investigations revealed sandy gravel underlying red brick and cement foundations of the structure currently occupying the site.
- 2.8 The site is centred at National Grid Reference TQ 2545 7948.
- 2.9 The site was allocated the unique site code ENS19.

### **3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

3.1 The following summary was adapted from the Written Scheme of Investigation for 163 Kensington High Street, (Hawkins 2019).

3.2 Prehistoric

3.3 The site is located in the Tier II Holland Park, Campden Hill and Kensington Archaeological Priority Area. The APA has significant evidence for prehistoric settlement: Mesolithic and Neolithic (c. 4,000 to 2,200 BC) material from Vicarage Gate on Old Church Street; later prehistoric multi-phase evidence from the Holland Park School area; a Bronze Age (c. 2,200 to 700 BC) burnt mound from the former Queen Elizabeth College site at the Phillimores on Campden Hill Road near the south-west summit and other significant sites across the APA (GLHER search).

3.4 At Earl's Terrace, c 470m to the west of the site, 60 pieces of undated burnt and struck flint were found. An early Neolithic struck flint was found during an excavation at The Phillimores c. 400m north of the site. These excavations also revealed evidence of Bronze Age activity suggestive of a temporary settlement in the area, and a burnt mound. Evidence of Bronze Age cooking/food preparation was also identified (Davis 2006).

3.5 In the later Iron Age and Roman period this area appears to have supported mixed farming communities with field systems set out alongside the roads utilising the fertile, well-drained gravel geology and south-facing slopes.

3.6 An excavation at the Sir John Atkins Building, less than 100m northwest of The Phillimores, uncovered an Early Iron Age large sub-rectangular feature and post holes suggesting a building. Late Iron Age activity was also identified here including ditches, post holes and pits.

3.7 Roman

3.8 The Roman period (43 to 409 AD) saw a continuation of the farming practices within the APA with Roman farmsteads evident on the lower ground at or near the base of the spur, suggesting a shift in focus to facilitate access to the floodplain and hillside resources. The APA was crossed by a series of prehistoric trackways. The APA includes a possible Roman, road to the south along what is now Kensington High Street, directly to the north of the site. A Roman ditch was recorded during a watching brief on Earls Terrace on the Kensington High Street alignment and roadside settlements may have developed along this southern road during the Roman period. The presence of these established routes to the north and south of Campden Hill would have ensured trade and movement between the prehistoric and Roman settlements.

3.9 Recent excavations across the wider landscape indicate significant evidence for a Roman farming community alongside the road (i.e. The Diana Memorial Hyde Park; St Mary Abbots Hospital and Earls Terrace). There is archaeological evidence for an unbroken continuity of settlement from pre-Roman societies into the Roman period.

3.10 Saxon and Medieval



- 3.11 The names Kensington and Chelsea are Saxon in origin. Chelsea derives from Chelchehithe, Saxon for chalk and landing place, corrupted by the 16th century to the more familiar Chelsey. Cyningholt, meaning kingswood, is the modern Kensal previously the outlying portion of Chelsea. Kensington probably derives from Chenesitun, 'town' of Chenesi's people. Today some historians believe that all three places were one and owned by early kings, possibly as a residence, as Chelsea was a known meeting-place. By 1086 the Manor of Chelsea was owned by the Earl of Salisbury and Kensington by Aubrey de Vere.
- 3.12 Both parishes, according to the Domesday Book, had a priest and probably a Saxon church. The first mention of All Saints (Chelsea Old Church) appears in 1175 and St Mary Abbots in 1242. The parish church and its land were given to the Abbots of St Mary's, Abingdon, in thanks for medical assistance given to Godfrey, son of Aubrey de Vere; hence the name.
- 3.13 Excavations at Earl's Terrace, c 470m to the west of the site, produced remains of timber buildings dating to the Late Saxon/Early Norman period which may have represented a farmstead or been part of a larger manorial complex. It is likely that ribbon development existed along Kensington High Street between the Earl's Terrace site and St Mary Abbott's during the Saxon period (pers comm A Douglas PCA). At 6-12 Church Street, c.600m to the north-east of the site, Middle Saxon and Saxo-Norman features were identified, comprising ditches, pits and post holes.
- 3.14 An early medieval church is known to have occupied the site of St Mary Abbott's Church, at the junction of Kensington Church Street and Kensington High Street, c. 330m to the east of the site. The church was probably in existence before 1100 AD. Evidence of a medieval settlement was revealed at Earl's Terrace, c. 470m west of the site, including a ditch and gully, plough marks and the remains of a medieval building. The remains of a manor house, moated site and traces of a 15th century building were found c. 350m north-west of the site.
- 3.15 Post-Medieval and Modern
- 3.16 In the post medieval period (post 1539 AD) the archaeological interest in the APA is influenced by the built heritage. By the time of John Rocque's map of 1746, the APA is shown as a broadly rural landscape cut mainly by the principal roads with little roadside development apart from St Mary Abbott's Church, the farms and a cluster of small isolated developments. To the east, Rocque shows Kensington Palace and its formal gardens running up to the Roman road. The three great mansions of Holland House, Campden House and the close proximity of Kensington Palace to the east characterise the later history of the APA.
- 3.17 The village of Kensington flourished after the establishment of Kensington Palace as a royal residence in 1689 and was described as a town by 1705. Nevertheless, it did retain its rural nature once away from the main road. The country parish amalgamated a number of smaller hamlets and villages making Kensington influential over a large swathe of the borough forming the districts of North, Central and South Kensington. Much of the area was famous for its market gardens from the 16th century.

- 3.18 Kensington Church Street and Campden Hill Road are of great antiquity forming the main medieval thoroughfares from Kensington to the medieval hamlet of Notting Hill and the northern areas of the borough. Of particular archaeological significance is the Church of St Mary Abbots, Kensington High Street. The present church was built in 1872 to designs by Sir George Gilbert Scott, combining neo-Gothic and early-English styles, but various earlier churches have stood on this site since the 12th century. The large graveyard is now set out as memorial gardens and was opened as a public garden in 1953. It contains funerary monuments from the mid-17th century onwards.
- 3.19 The Rocque map of 1746 shows the site lying just to the west of the village of Kensington, in open farmland. A map of the Parish of Kensington (1820) shows further ribbon development along Kensington High Street and on the location of the site. The OS Town Plan of 1850 shows the site located at the front of a series of yards, with vacant land on either side. The 1869 Ordnance Survey map shows The Terrace constructed to the east of the site, with large gardens to the rear. The site is occupied by a building bridging over the entrance to Adam and Eve Mews (not named) and a building on the same footprint as the current building. The station at Kensington High Street has been constructed to the east and the surrounding area has been fully built up on much of the same street pattern as today.
- 3.20 The Ordnance Survey map of 1895 shows that The Terrace has been entirely rebuilt, and the land behind it cleared. The site remains with the same layout, but the main building is marked as a Public House, known as the Adam and Eve. The mews buildings to the rear have been constructed and the mews is marked as Adam and Eve Mews. A smithy is marked directly to the rear of the pub.
- 3.21 By the Ordnance Survey map of 1914, Ivorna Gardens has been constructed in the cleared ground to the rear of The Terrace, east of the site. The site retains the same layout, as it does on the 1952 Ordnance Survey map, which does not record any bomb damage to the site. The London Bomb Damage Map shows that the mews houses directly to the rear of the site have been 'seriously damaged, repairable at cost' and a building to the west of those houses has suffered 'total destruction'. This site is shown as cleared ground on the 1952 and 1962 Ordnance Survey maps, but no changes are shown on the site itself.

## **4 GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY**

- 4.1 The solid geology of the site is shown by the British Geological Survey Online (BGS 2019) as London Clay deposits (Clay and Silt) forming the London Basin.
- 4.2 Overlying the London Clay is a series of gravel terraces deposited during periods of glacial and inter-glacial conditions, more specifically the Taplow Gravel Formation (Sand and Gravel).
- 4.3 The site is located immediately south of a low lying east-west ridge, Campden Hill. The nearest watercourse is the River Thames, located 2.4 miles to the south. The front of the site on Kensington High Street is located at c. 12.67m OD.

## **5 ARCHAEOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY**

- 5.1 In accordance with the Written Scheme of Investigation (Hawkins 2019), an archaeological watching brief was commissioned to ascertain the impacts of the proposed development, as well as the nature and extent of archaeological remains.
- 5.2 Reduction of deposits in 100mm spit using hand tools in two underpinning pits, was conducted under the supervision of the attendant archaeologist.
- 5.3 A full digital photographic record of the watching brief was compiled.
- 5.4 All recording systems adopted during the investigations were fully compatible with those developed out of the Department of Urban Archaeology Site Manual and presented in PCA's Operations Manual (Taylor 2009).

## **6 SUMMARY OF RESULTS**

- 6.1 Two underpinning pits were excavated along the western and southern edge of the building basement.
- 6.2 Underpinning Pit 1 measured 2.05m north-south, 0.60m east-west, and was excavated to a maximum depth of 1.60m below ground level.
- 6.3 Underpinning Pit 2 measured 0.80m north-south, 1.00m east-west and was excavated to a maximum depth of 0.60m below ground level.
- 6.4 The earliest deposit observed in both pits was the Taplow Gravel Member, formed in a river dominated environment, approximately 2 million years ago (Layers [1], [2] and [3]). These deposits were seen in both pits, at a maximum height of 0.20m below ground level and continued below the lower limits of investigation.
- 6.5 The gravel was sealed by the redbrick and concrete foundation and basement slab of the current structure, ranging from 0.20m to 0.90m thick.
- 6.6 No archaeological remains predating the 20th century were recovered or observed over the course of the investigation. It was clear that the modern construction had truncated all potential archaeological deposits on the site.

## **8 CONCLUSIONS**

- 8.1 The Taplow Gravel Member was present in all areas observed, consistent with the superficial geology of the area. The gravel was sealed by the modern concrete basement slab. No archaeological finds or features were identified.
- 8.2 Archaeological activity potentially present within the site was likely to have been previously removed by the horizontal truncation caused by the construction of the current building.
- 8.3 Once the project is deemed complete and this report approved by Historic England on behalf of the local planning authority, the completed archive comprising all site records from the fieldwork will eventually be deposited by Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited with the MLAA under site code ENS19.
- 8.4 The results of the archaeological investigation will be published as an entry in the London Archaeologist 'Round Up'.

## **9 ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

- 9.1 Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd would like to thank RPS for commissioning this project and Laura O’Gorman for monitoring it on behalf of the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea. The author would like to thank Helen Hawkins for his project management and editing, and Ray Murphey for the illustrations.

## **10 BIBLIOGRAPHY**

- 10.1 Hawkins, H 2019 *163 Kensington High Street: Written Scheme of Investigation*, unpublished client report.

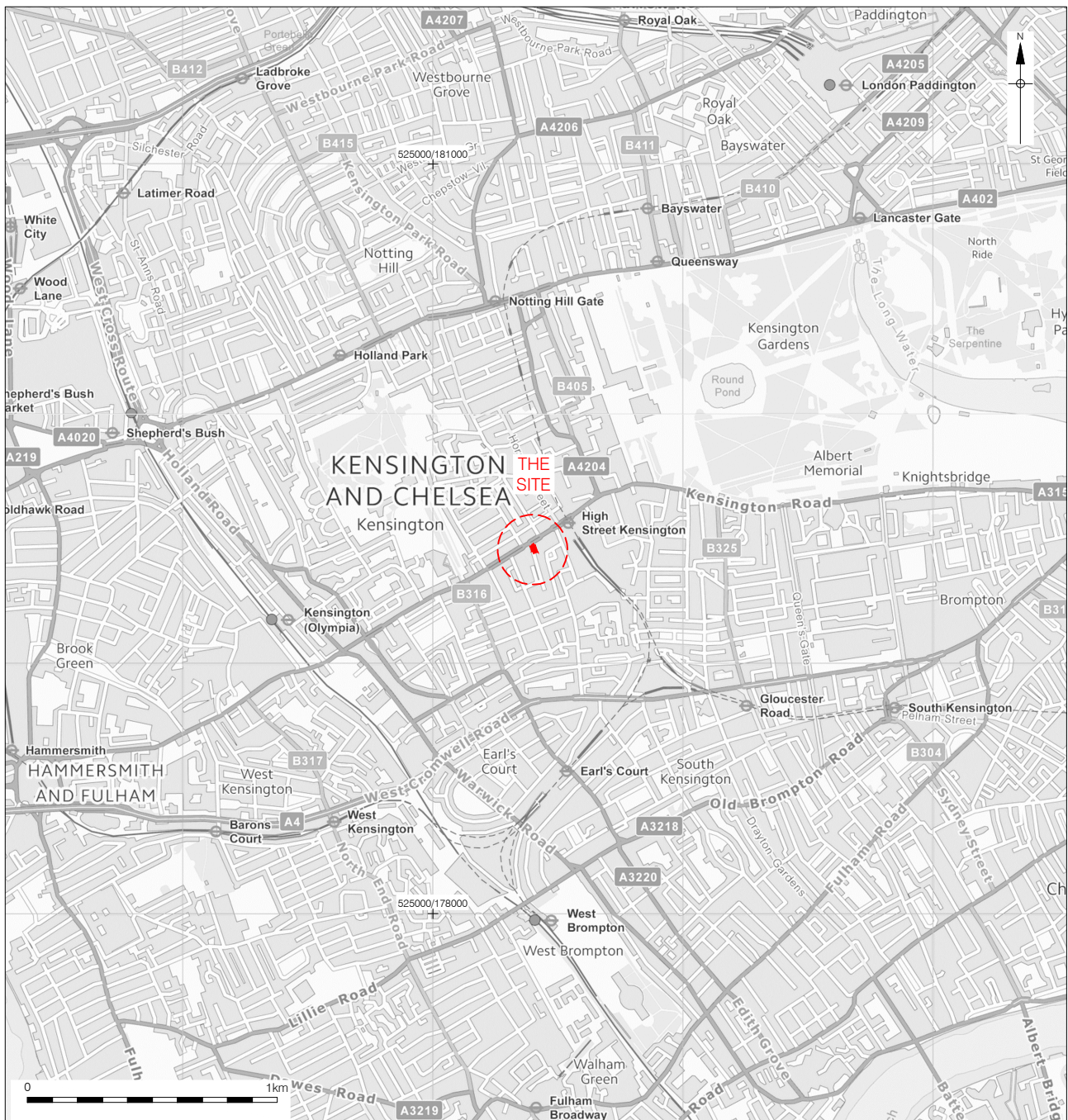
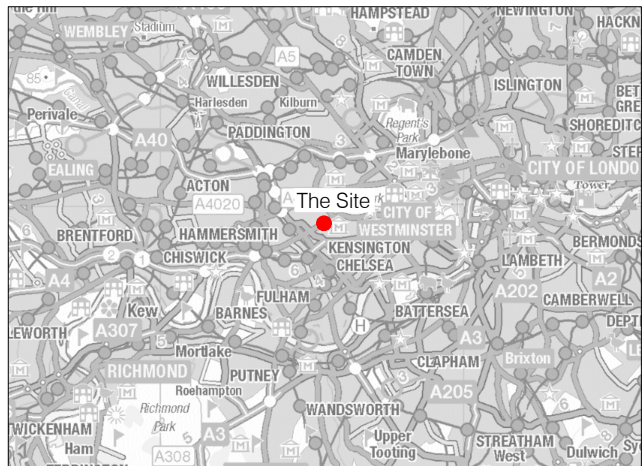


Figure 1  
 Site Location  
 1:800,000, 1:250,000, 1:20,000 at A4



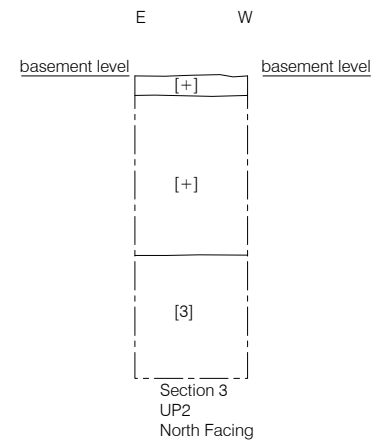
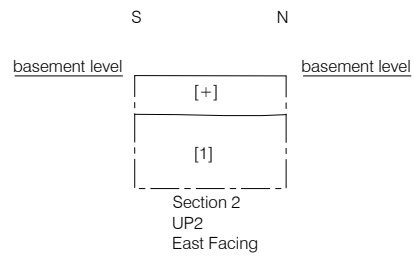
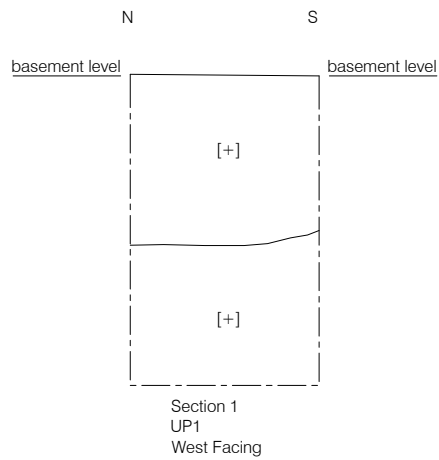
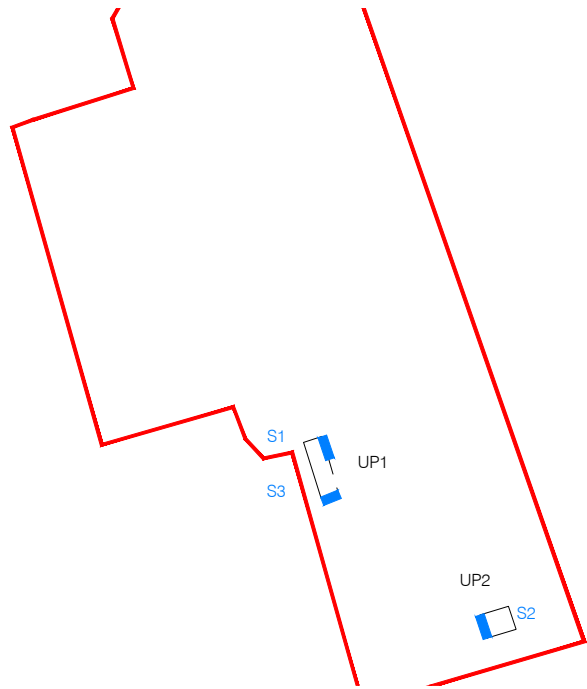


Figure 3  
Sections  
1:40 at A4



## 12 PLATES



Plate 1: Section 3, looking south.

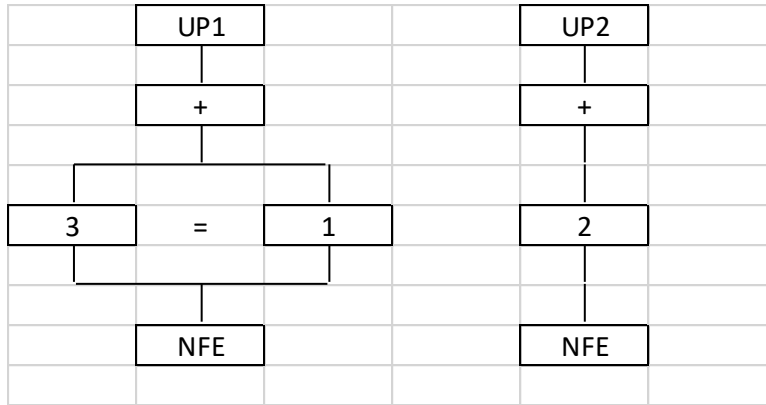


Plate 2: UP2, looking north

## APPENDIX 1: CONTEXT INDEX

Context	Type	Trench	Interpretation	Category	Levels (M) below ground level
1	Layer	UP1	Natural Gravel	Natural	0.4
2	Layer	UP2	Natural Gravel	Natural	0.2
3	Layer	UP1	Natural gravel	Natural	0.9

## APPENDIX 2: STRATIGRAPHIC MATRIX



## APPENDIX 3: OASIS REPORT FORM

OASIS ID: preconst1-360542

---

### Project details

Project name 163 Kensington High Street

Short description of the project An archaeological watching brief was conducted by Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited at 163 Kensington High Street, Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea. The works comprised the monitoring of ground reduction in two underpinning pits along the western and southern basement walls of the current structure. Natural gravel was recorded directly underlying the basement slab. No archaeological remains were observed over the course of the investigations.

Project dates Start: 10-07-2019 End: 28-07-2019

Previous/future work Not known / No

Any associated project reference codes ENS19 - Sitecode

Type of project Recording project

Site status Local Authority Designated Archaeological Area

Current Land use Industry and Commerce 3 - Retailing

Monument type LAYER None

Significant Finds NONE None

Investigation type "Watching Brief"

Prompt Planning condition

---

Project location

Country                    England

Site location            GREATER LONDON KENSINGTON AND CHELSEA KENSINGTON  
163 Kensington High Street

Postcode                W8 6SU

Study area               20 Square metres

Site coordinates        TQ 2545 7948 51.499822018285 -0.192460267457 51 29 59 N 000 11  
32 W Point

Lat/Long Datum        Unknown

Height OD / Depth     Min: 0m Max: 0m

---

Project creators

Name                    of RPS  
Organisation

Project                brief GLAAS  
originator

Project                design Helen Hawkins  
originator

Project                Helen Hawkins  
director/manager

Project supervisor     Chloe Sinclair

Type                    of House builder  
sponsor/funding body

Name of unknown  
sponsor/funding body

---

Project archives

Physical Archive No  
Exists?

Digital Archive MLAA  
recipient

Digital Archive ID ENS19

Digital Contents "none"

Digital Media "Database","Images raster / digital photography","Text"  
available

Paper Archive MLAA  
recipient

Paper Archive ID ENS19

Paper Contents "none"

Paper Media "Context sheet","Section"  
available

---

Project bibliography 1

Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)

Publication type

Title 163 KENSINGTON HIGH STREET, ROYAL BOROUGH OF  
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