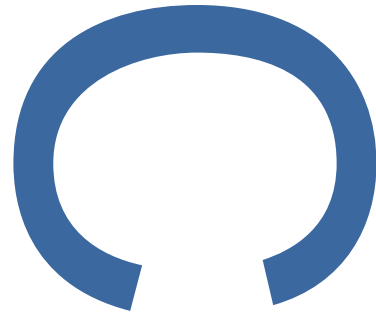
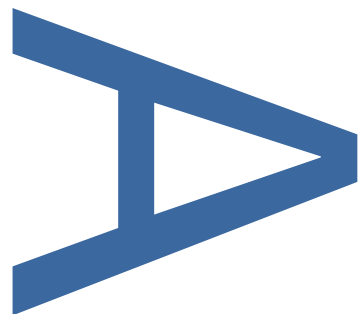


**259 Rotherhithe Street, London
Borough of Southwark, SE16 5EJ**



An Archaeological Watching Brief



<i>Planning reference</i>	15/AP/4794		
<i>Local planning authority</i>	Southwark Borough Council		
<i>PCA report no.</i>	R13981	<i>Site Code</i>	RHH19
<i>PCA project no</i>	K5449	<i>Date</i>	January 2020

PRE-CONSTRUCT ARCHAEOLOGY LIMITED

www.pre-construct.com

Project Information	
Site name	259 Rotherhithe Street, London Borough of Southwark, SE16 5EJ
Project type	An Archaeological Watching Brief
Site address	259 Rotherhithe Street, London Borough of Southwark, SE16 5EJ, SE16 5EJ
NGR	TQ 47928 69960
Local planning authority	Southwark Borough Council
Planning reference	15/AP/4794
Commissioning client	DB Construction
Project dates	13 November 2019
Archive site code	RHH19

PCA Information			
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Reissued report version:		
Reason for reissue:		
Project Manager approval:		



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1 ABSTRACT

- 1.1 This report details the results of an archaeological watching brief undertaken by Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited during the ground reduction at 259 Rotherhithe Street, London Borough of Southwark, SE16 5EJ. The site is centred at National Grid Reference TQ 36547 80290 (Figure 1).
- 1.2 The watching brief was undertaken by Stacey Amanda Harris on 13th November 2019.
- 1.3 Four areas of ground reduction were monitored within the already cast concrete foundations of the proposed building. Within these areas the remaining concrete floor surface of the previous building was removed, and the exposed deposits were reduced to a depth of up to 0.34m below the top of the concrete foundation (BGL). The works were undertaken by the client, DB Construction Ltd, in order to lay the internal floor surfaces within the proposed building.
- 1.4 Wall remnants of the recently demolished property were seen, along with made ground deposits relating to the erecting of the previous property and earlier post-medieval ground consolidation. At no point was the excavation deep enough to uncover natural deposits.

2 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd (PCA) was commissioned by DB Construction Ltd to undertake an archaeological watching brief during intrusive groundworks relating to the construction of a property at 259 Rotherhithe Street, London SE16 5EJ (Figures 1 & 2). The site is centred at TQ 36547 80290.
- 2.2 The pre-existing property on the site had been demolished, and the foundation trenches of the proposed building had been excavated and backfilled with concrete at the time that the archaeological works began. The site fronts onto Rotherhithe Street to the west, with the northerly border of the site formed by The Blacksmiths Arms, and the Docklands Riverside DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel to the south and east (Figure 2).
- 2.3 The archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Stacey Amanda Harris and the work was project managed by Zbigniew Pozorski, both of PCA. Gillian King of the Greater London Archaeological Advisory Service (GLAAS), Historic England, monitored the project on behalf of the Borough of Southwark.
- 2.4 The work followed, where possible, the methodology which was set out in a Written Scheme of Investigation (Pozorski 2018) and approved in advance by Gillian King.
- 2.5 A desk-based assessment had been produced for the site by Archaeology Collective in 2015 (Johnson 2015), showing little evidence of activity prior to the post-medieval where successive periods of reclamation and ground consolidation took place creating the area. The site is located within a local authority Archaeological Priority Area: Borough, Bermondsey and Riverside.
- 2.6 The completed archive comprising written, drawn and photographic records will be deposited with the London Archaeological Archive (LAA) identified by the unique site code RHH19, obtained from the Museum of London.

3 GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY

- 3.1 The following geological and topographical information is summarised from the WSI (Pozorski 2018).
- 3.2 The local geology consists of alluvium overlying clay, silt and sand of the Lambeth Group, a deposit which occurs throughout the London Basin, and which is up to 39m thick on the west side of the London Basin (www.bgs.ac.uk).
- 3.3 The site is located 130m west of the River Thames on generally level land at c. 2.2m above Ordnance Datum (OD).
- 3.4 The site is located on the eastern side of Rotherhithe Street in the area of Rotherhithe peninsula opposite to Isle of Dogs (Figure 1). Prior to the commencement of work, 259 Rotherhithe Street comprised a brick-built three-storey building located within a complex of former riverside warehouses and wharves and appended to the south side of The Blacksmith's Arms (Figure 2). The building at 259 Rotherhithe street has since been demolished.

4 PLANNING BACKGROUND

4.1 Planning permission has been granted for the construction of a three-storey side extension and a 'Mansard-style' roof extension to existing three-storey building and associated external alterations to the existing retained front elevation to create two 2-bed/3-person flats (London Borough of Southwark Planning Ref. 15/AP/4794).

4.2 The planning condition (3) attached to the decision issued on 1st February 2016 reads as follows:

The developer shall ensure that a suitably qualified archaeologist is present during the undertaking of any ground disturbing works in the development are, so that an archaeological watching brief can be conducted. The archaeological watching brief shall be undertaken to the standards of the Institute of Field Archaeologists. The Local Planning Authority shall be informed, in writing, at least two weeks prior to the commencement of the development of the name of the said archaeologist and no work shall begin until the Local Planning Authority has confirmed, in writing, that the proposed archaeologist is suitable. A copy of the watching brief report shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority within two months of the fieldwork being completed by the archaeologist.

Reason: *To identify and record any features of archaeological interest discovered during the works, in order to mitigate the impact of the works on the archaeological resource, in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (2012), policy 7.8 (Heritage assets and archaeology) of the London Plan (2015), policy 12 (Design and Conservation) of the Southwark Core Strategy (2011) and saved policy 3.19 (Archaeology) of the Southwark Unitary Development Plan (2007).*

4.3 This report is to address the above condition.

5 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

- 5.1 The following background is summarised from the WSI (Pozorski 2018).
- 5.1.1 The site has a low potential for structural remains predating the post-medieval period. No evidence of prehistoric or Roman occupation is known from the surrounding area. The prehistoric evidence is limited to findspots, and remains of Roman activity consist of residual finds of coins, brooches, a hairpin, stud and pottery sherds.
- 5.1.2 Although historic sources mention Rotherhithe, there are no sites or finds of Saxon or Medieval date within the area of the site.
- 5.1.3 Post-medieval activity is principally associated with successive periods of reclamation, consolidation and raising of the riverbank within a 60m wide strip east of Rotherhithe Street, an area which was utilised in the post-medieval period as a timber yard associated with shipbuilding, as grain storage from the mid-19th century and, more recently, redeveloped for residential and hotel accommodation. The land on which the building stands is therefore made ground of post-medieval date.
- 5.1.4 The age of the present building on the site and The Blacksmith's Arms public house is unknown. They may be contemporary with the redevelopment of the site in the 1870s as illustrated by historic maps of this time. A late 19th century mock Tudor and glazed brick façade has obscured the original architecture of The Blacksmith's Arms. The neighbouring building (to the south) was demolished in the 1970s.

6 METHODOLOGY

- 6.1 Prior to the arrival of the attendant archaeologist the existing building had been demolished and the foundation trenches for the proposed building had been excavated and backfilled with concrete.
- 6.2 The remaining groundworks consisted of ground reduction within the bays formed by the foundation trenches. Here excavation extended to a depth of between 0.20m and 0.34m below the top of the poured concrete foundations to allow for the construction of the internal floor surfaces of the proposed building.
- 6.3 The existing concrete floor was broken out, the rubble removed and then the surviving deposits graded through using a 3-ton excavator. The machine excavator was fitted with a breaker and flat bladed bucket as necessary, and during the internal ground reduction operated under constant archaeological supervision.
- 6.4 Due to the nature of the deposits, minimal hand excavation was required. Where necessary the deposits were cleaned by the attendant archaeologist.
- 6.5 All deposits were recorded on *pro forma* context sheets. The areas of monitoring were planned at a scale of 1:20 and a full photographic record of the site was maintained.
- 6.6 The recording system adopted during the investigations were fully compatible with those developed out of the Department of Urban Archaeology Site Manual, now presented within PCA's Site Manual (Taylor 2009, updated 2018). The site archive was organised to be compatible with other archaeological archives produce in the London Borough of Southwark.
- 6.7 The levels provided in this report are taken as below ground level (BGL), this height is taken as the level upper surface of the concrete foundation laid prior to our arrival on site.
- 6.8 The areas of archaeological monitoring were located from proposed building plans to obtain a correlation to the OS grid.
- 6.9 The completed archive produced during the evaluation, comprising written, drawn and photographic records, will eventually be deposited with Museum of London Archaeological Archive (LAA) identified with site code RHH19.

7 ARCHAEOLOGICAL SEQUENCE

- 7.1 No natural deposits were observed during the works as excavation did not extend to a sufficient depth either during the monitored works, where excavation extended to a maximum of 0.30m BGL, or prior to this during the excavation of the foundation trenches to a depth of 1m BGL.
- 7.2 During the excavation of the foundation trenches, prior to Pre-Construct Archaeology's arrival on site, a layer of dark blue grey material was seen from approximately 0.40m BGL (Plate 1). This layer continued below the depth of excavation at 1m BGL and was described by DB Construction staff who were on site at the time of excavation as a clay. It is unclear whether this was naturally laid down alluvial relating to the River Thames, or redeposited alluvial clay deposited as part of the post-medieval reclamation of the land to the east of Rotherhithe Street.
- 7.3 Two remnants of brick foundation of demolished 259 Rotherhithe Street were seen during the monitored works. Across the centre of Bay 1, on an east-west alignment a 2.33m long wall [9] (Figure 3, Plate 2) was seen at a depth of between 0.20m and 0.34m BGL. To the south of Bay 2 a small remnant of masonry [3] (Figure 3, Plate 3) measuring 0.50m by 0.32m was seen at a height of 0.27m below the concrete foundation. Both [3] and [9] were constructed from 230mm by 100mm red brick, bonded with a light yellow brown lime mortar.
- 7.4 Wall [3] was partly overlain by a loose rubble and mid grey sandy silt deposit [2] seen from around the height of the top of the concrete foundation.
- 7.5 Across Bay 3 and the East of Bay 4 a mid to dark brown sandy silt, [6] (Plate 4) and [7] (Plate 5) respectively, was seen. From layer [6] a fragment of clay tobacco pipe (1680-1710) and a fragment of post-medieval glass were retrieved. This layer may be the interface with the deposit seen within the foundation trenches.
- 7.6 Within Bays 1, 2 and 4 a layer of mid brown grey sandy silt, [1], [4] and [8] (Plate 5) respectively, were seen to partially overlay or seal the earlier deposits and masonry. This layer was heavily flecked with chalk, mortar and fragments of ceramic building material, and was likely a levelling deposit relating to the construction of the demolished building and in places disturbed by the current demolition works.
- 7.7 Evidence of modern activity was seen within Bays 1 and 2. To the southwest of Bay 2 a modern plastic duct was seen set in sand. Two modern concrete piles were seen, the first was to the south of Bay 1, and the second was partly truncated by the southern foundation trench of the proposed building in Bay 2. The concrete piles were thought on site to relate to underpinning work done on the previous building.



Plate 1: Photograph provided by DB Construction, foundation trench, looking north.



Plate 2: Bay 1, looking southwest, wall [9]



Plate 3: Bay 2, looking west, modern plastic ducting laid in sand in the background with demolished wall [3] on the left in the foreground, 0.5m scale



Plate 4: Bay 3, looking east, layer [6], 0.5m scale



Plate 5: Bay 4, looking south, layer [7] to the left, overlain by layer [8] to the right

8 CONCLUSIONS

- 8.1 The watching brief only monitored the final phase of intrusive groundworks in the form of ground reduction between the recently cast concrete foundations. The area of excavation was divided between four Bays (numbered 1, 2, 3 and 4), the largest of which measured 2.9m by 5.5m. The maximum depth excavated during the archaeologically monitored works was 0.34m below the concrete foundations.
- 8.2 No natural deposits were observed as excavation did not extend to sufficient depths.
- 8.3 During excavation of the foundation trenches a layer of clay was seen from a depth of 0.40m BGL and continuing below 1m BGL according to photographs taken at the time and eyewitness recollection on site. Towards the east of site, a deposit was seen which may have represented the interface between this clay layer and the deposits related to the construction of the now demolished property at 259 Rotherhithe Street.
- 8.4 The remnants of brick walls were seen to the south and west of the site and appeared to relate to the now demolished property.
- 8.5 Across the south and west of the site a layer of rubble make up material was seen, likely a levelling deposit for the internal concrete floor.
- 8.6 The completed archive, comprising all site records from the fieldwork, including field records and artefacts, will be deposited by Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited with LAA under site code RHH19. Until then the archive will be stored at our headquarters in Brockley, London.
- 8.7 The results of the archaeological investigation will be published as an entry in the *London Archaeologist* 'Round Up'.

9 BIBLIOGRAPY

Johnson, A. 2015. *Archaeological Desk Based Assessment: 259 Rotherhithe Street, London SE16 5EJ*. Archaeology Collective.

Pozorski, Z. 2018. *259 Rotherhithe Street, London Borough of Southwark: Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Watching Brief*. Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd unpublished report.

10 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- 10.1 Pre-Construct Archaeology would like to thank DB Construction Ltd for commissioning the work and particularly their onsite staff for their help and hospitality.
- 10.2 We also thank Gillian King for monitoring the fieldwork on behalf of the Borough of Southwark.
- 10.3 The author would like to thank Zbigniew Pozorski for his help, project management and editing, Chris Jarrett for spot dating of finds and also Ray Murphy for the CAD illustrations.



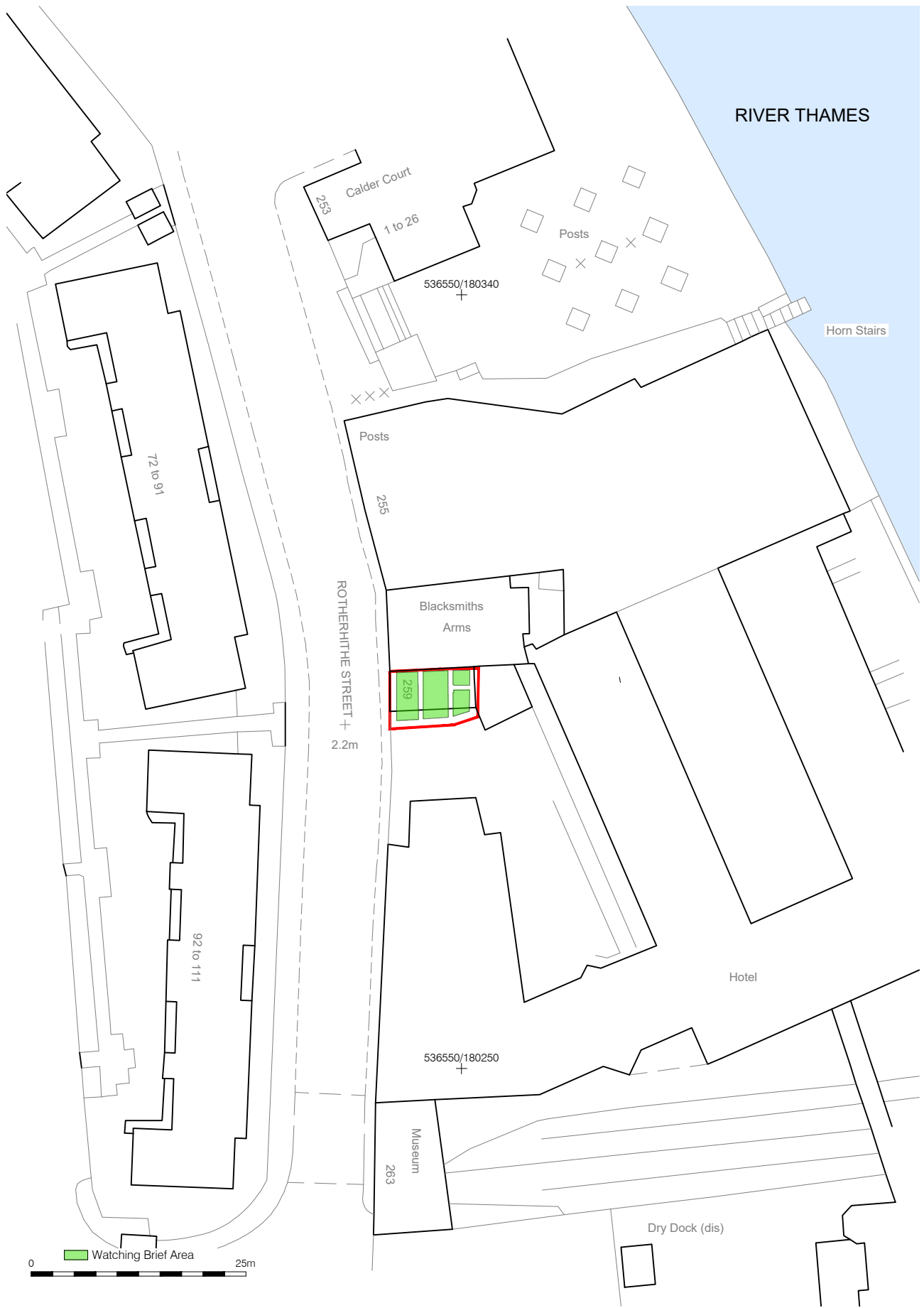


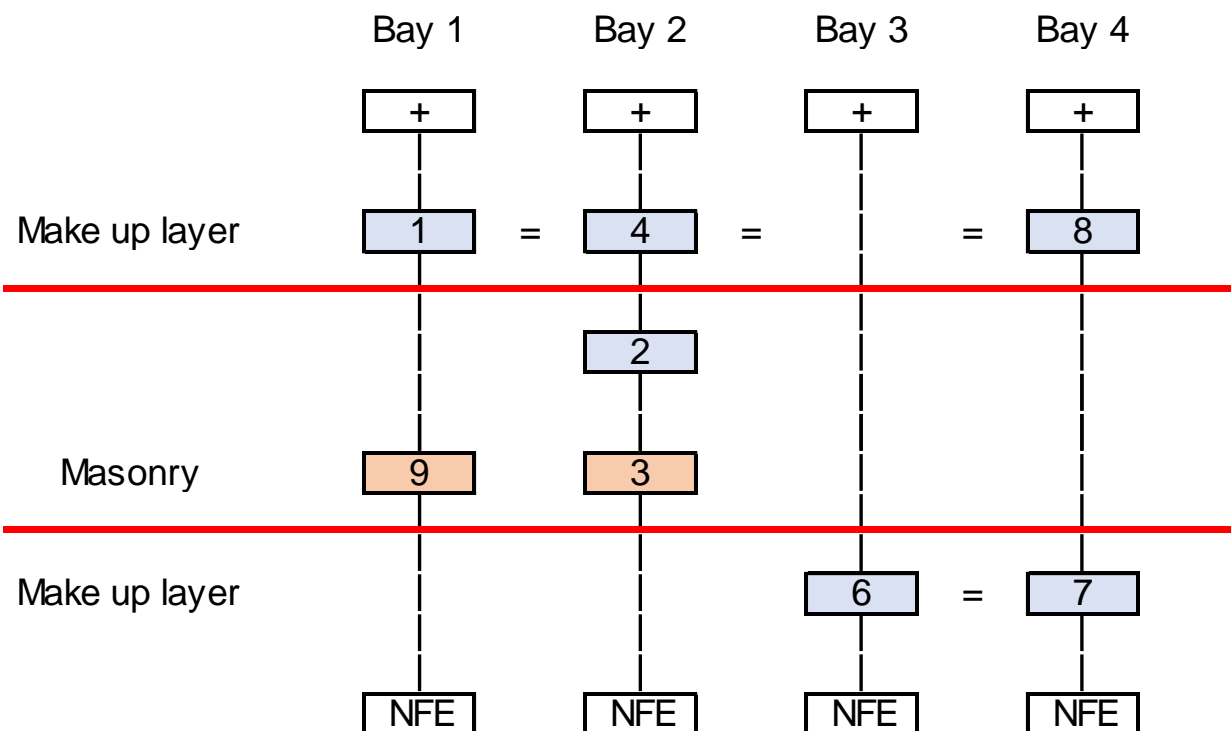


Figure 3
 Plan of Watching Brief Area
 1:100 at A4

APPENDIX 1: CONTEXT INDEX

Context	Type	Equal To	Area	Interpretation	Category	Length (m)	Width (m)
1	Layer	4, 8	Bay 1	Layer of made ground	Make-up	2.5	
2	Layer		Bay 2	Deposit of made ground	Make-up	2.04	0.6
3	Masonry		Bay 2	Remnant of external SE wall of demolished property	Wall	0.5	0.32
4	Layer	1	Bay 2	Layer of made ground	Make-up		
5	Void			Void	Void		
6	Layer	7	Bay 3	Layer of made ground	Make-up		
7	Layer	6	Bay 4	Layer of made ground	Make-up		
8	Layer	1, 4	Bay 4	Layer of made ground	Make-up		
9	Masonry		Bay 1	Remnant of internal east-west wall	Wall	2.33	0.23

APPENDIX 2: SITE MATRIX



APPENDIX 3: Oasis Form

11 OASIS ID: preconst1-374226

Project details

Project name	259 Rotherhithe Street
Short description of the project	The site comprised 4 areas of ground reduction within the already cast concrete foundations of the proposed building. The remaining concrete floor surface of the previous building was removed, and the exposed deposits were reduced to a depth of up to 0.34m below the top of the concrete foundation. The works were undertaken in order to lay the internal floor surfaces within the proposed building. Wall remnants of the recently demolished property were seen, along with made ground deposits, relating to the erecting of the previous property and earlier post-medieval ground consolidation. At no point was the trench deep enough to uncover natural deposits.
Project dates	Start: 13-11-2019 End: 13-11-2019
Type of project	Recording project
Site status	Local Authority Designated Archaeological Area
Current Land use	Residential 1 - General Residential
Monument type	WALL Post Medieval
Monument type	LAYER Post Medieval
Investigation type	"Watching Brief"
Prompt	Planning condition

Project location

Country	England
Site location	GREATER LONDON SOUTHWARK BERMONDSEY ROTHERHITHE AND SOUTHWARK 259 Rotherhithe Street
Postcode	SE16 5EJ
Study area	65 Square metres
Site coordinates	TQ 36547 80290 51.504524364472 -0.032353308684 51 30 16 N 000 01 56 W Point
Height OD / Depth	Min: 0m Max: 0m

Project creators

Name of Organisation	Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited
----------------------	-----------------------------------

Project brief originator	DB Construction Ltd
Project design originator	Zbigniew Pozorski
Project director/manager	Zbigniew Pozorski
Project supervisor	Stacey Amanda Harris
Type of sponsor/funding body	Developer
Name of sponsor/funding body	DB Construction Ltd

Project archives

Physical Archive Exists?	No
Digital Archive recipient	LAA
Digital Archive ID	RHH19
Digital Media available	"Database","Images raster / digital photography","Text"
Paper Archive recipient	LAA
Paper Archive ID	RHH19
Paper Media available	"Context sheet","Diary","Plan","Unpublished Text"

Project bibliography 1

Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	259 Rotherhithe Street, London Borough of Southwark, London SE16 5EJ: Archaeological Watching Brief
Author(s)/Editor(s)	Harris, S. A.
Date	2020
Issuer or publisher	Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited
Place of issue or publication	London
Description	A4 grey literature document with PCA covers

Entered by archive (archive@pre-construct.com)

Entered on 6 January 2020

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