

**Interim Statement of an Archaeological Watching Brief at 71 - 79  
Rochester Row, Westminster SW1**

**Central National Grid Reference: TQ 2944 7884**

**Site Code: RHW 04**

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## **1 ABSTRACT**

- 1.1 An archaeological watching brief was conducted by Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd. at 71 - 79 Rochester Row, Westminster (henceforth the Site) (Figure 1). The work was designed to assess the nature of ground conditions and any surviving remains if present, and was commissioned by CgMs Consulting on behalf of Moss Architecture and Design.
- 1.2 The evaluation was undertaken between the and September 2004. It comprised the investigation of four geotechnical test pits.
- 1.3 The underlying ground in three trenches was seen to be deposits of probable made ground, post-medieval in date. The natural strata was not observed in any trench. The remains of either or century services were found; these, combined with an early concrete slab, prevented deep investigation in the fourth trench.

## **2 INTRODUCTION**

- 2.1 An archaeological evaluation was undertaken by Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd. at 71 - 79 Rochester Row, Westminster (Figure 1). The Site is currently occupied by disused buildings that are to be demolished to make way for new residential accommodation. CgMs Consulting commissioned Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd. to undertake the evaluation on behalf of Moss Architecture and Design. The site is centred at National Grid Reference TQ 2944 7884.
- 2.2 The Site is bounded by Walcott Street to the south, Rochester Row to the west, a building on Rochester Row to the north and by buildings on Vincent Square to the east.
- 2.3 The evaluation was conducted between the and September 2004. It followed a method statement prepared by Tim Bradley of Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd <sup>1</sup>. This proposed that the four trenches would all be 2m by 2m in size. However, this was reduced slightly in response to circumstances on site.
- 2.4 The evaluation was monitored by Diane Walls of the Greater London Archaeological Advisory Service (GLAAS). The project manager for Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd. was Tim Bradley, and the work was supervised by Chris Mayo.
- 2.5 The completed archive, comprising written, drawn and photographic records and artefacts will eventually be deposited either at the London Archaeological Archive and Research Centre (LAARC) under the site code RHW 04.

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<sup>1</sup> Bradley 2004

Figure 1: Site Location

Figure 2: Trench Location

### **3 PLANNING BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 The relevant development plan framework was provided the City of Westminster Unitary Development Plan Written Statement. This plan contains the following policy that provides a framework for the consideration of development proposals affecting ancient monuments and archaeology.

#### **POLICY 9.108**

WHERE DEVELOPMENT MAY AFFECT LAND OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL SIGNIFICANCE OR POTENTIAL, THE CITY COUNCIL WILL EXPECT APPLICANTS TO HAVE PROPERLY ASSESSED AND PLANNED FOR THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS OF THEIR PROPOSALS. IN THIS WAY THE COUNCIL AND THE APPLICANT WILL HAVE SUFFICIENT INFORMATION UPON WHICH AN INFORMED PLANNING DECISION, INCORPORATING APPROPRIATE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SAFEGUARDS, MAY BE BASED. SUCH SAFEGUARDS NORMALLY CONSIST OF DESIGN MEASURES TO ENSURE THE PERMANENT PRESERVATION OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL REMAINS IN SITU OR, WHERE THAT IS NOT APPROPRIATE, ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESCUE INVESTIGATIONS IN ADVANCE OF DEVELOPMENT.

## **4 GEOLOGY, TOPOGRAPHY AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

### **4.1 GEOLOGY**

4.1.1 The underlying geology of the Site is recent drift alluvium<sup>2</sup>.

### **4.2 TOPOGRAPHY**

4.2.1 The Site is located on relatively flat ground at a height of approximately 3.6m OD.

### **4.3 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

4.3.1 The Site lies between two Archaeological Priority Areas situated to the north-east and south-west. Little is known about the vicinity of the Site in the prehistoric period, although a Bronze Age sword was found nearby on the site of the former Millbank Prison. The Site lies to the west of the Roman City of Londinuim and Saxon *Lundenwic* in an area of lower-lying marginal land that may have been utilised for farming. Elements of London's Civil war defences are thought to have been situated close to the area of the Site.

4.3.2 A watching brief that was conducted by Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd. immediately to the north of the Site at the Old Rochester Row Police Station revealed Post-Medieval made ground deposits above natural sand, recorded at an upper height of approximately 1.8m OD<sup>3</sup>. A piece of CBM from one of the layers may be medieval in date, but was residual in an century deposit.

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<sup>2</sup> From British Geological Survey, 1:50 000 Series, England and Wales Sheet 270: South London (1981)

<sup>3</sup> Beasley 2001, 2



## 5 ARCHAEOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY

- 5.1 Four test pits were located in 73 - 79 Rochester Row, to examine ground conditions. The property at 71 Rochester Row had previously been basemented. These were all designed to be 2m by 2m in size. However, the presence of party walls within the buildings, and uncertainty over their status, led to the trenches being reduced in size for safety reasons. The dimensions of the trenches, intended and actual, are shown in Table 1. The excavation of Test Pit 1 encountered an early (probably century) concrete slab, associated with a ceramic drain pipe, preventing deep investigation. The depths that could be achieved in Test Pits 2, 3 and 4 were limited by the size of the pits themselves, so that natural ground was not seen in any.
- 5.2 The evaluation followed a specification prepared by Tim Bradley of Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd. All works were undertaken in accordance with 'Archaeological Guidance Paper 3 Standards and Practices in Archaeological Fieldwork in London', 'Archaeological Guidance Paper 4: Archaeological Reports' and 'Archaeological Guidance Paper 5 Watching Briefs' (GLAAS 1998).
- 5.3 All test pits were broken out by contractors using pneumatic hammers. Excavation proceeded by hand below the slab under archaeological supervision. The maximum depths of the trenches are shown in Table 1. Once archaeologically sensitive deposits or features were encountered, or once further progress was unsafe, excavation was stopped to allow archaeologists to clean and record as necessary.
- 5.4 Once excavation had stopped, a hand auger was used in order to identify the thicknesses of the deposits encountered. These results have been incorporated into this report.

Trench Number	Intended Dimensions (m)	Max Dimensions (m)	Max Depth (m)	Max height (m OD)
1	2 x 2	1.64 x 1.14	0.8	Approx 3.6
2	2 x 2	1.0 x 1.14	1.9	Approx 3.6
3	2 x 2	1.3 x 0.9	2.08	Approx 3.6
4	2 x 2	1.02 x 1.16	1.82	Approx 3.6

**Table 1: Trench Dimensions**

- 5.5 All levels in this report are approximate, established from a spot height of 3.6m OD on Rochester Row.

## **6 THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SEQUENCE**

### **6.1 PHASE 1: POST MEDIEVAL MADE GROUND**

- 6.1.1 Investigations in Test Pits 2, 3 and 4 found deposits of material that are probably made ground layers. Among these layers [2] and [7] were notable for their matrix of light brown sand-silt-clay, a brickearth material, recorded at 2.3m OD in Test Pit 2 and 2.5m OD in Test Pit 4. They may represent redeposited natural.
- 6.1.2 Layer [5] in Test Pit 3 at 1.6m OD in Test Pit 3 had a humic content unlike any other layers found on site. It may just be a made ground dump, but could equally be a soil horizon. It was found to be 0.08m thick.
- 6.1.3 In Test Pits 2 and 3, layer [1] and [4] respectively was a loose sand-silt with inclusions of gravel, oyster and CBM. It was 0.8m thick in Test Pit 2 and 1.5m thick in Test Pit 3, from an upper height of 3.18m OD (Test Pit 3).
- 6.1.4 Layer [6] in Test Pit 4 was notable for the quantity of artefactual material within it. The layer is dated to the early century, although it also contained late century pottery<sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>4</sup> C Jarrett, pers com

Figure 3: Sections 1 to 4

## **7 TEST PIT SUMMARY**

### **7.1 TEST PIT 1 (Section 1)**

- 7.1.1 Beneath modern made ground, an earlier slab was found at 3.12m OD. It had either been truncated by, or was associated with, a ceramic drain pipe to the east.

### **7.2 TEST PIT 2 (Section 2)**

- 7.2.1 Three layers were recorded by excavation and hand auger, with a combined thickness of 1.1m from 3.1m OD. Hand augering below this suggested the presence of a 0.3m deep void.

### **7.3 TEST PIT 3 (Section 3)**

- 7.3.1 A substantial layer of sand-silt, with a thickness of 1.58m from 3.18m OD, overlay a dark brown humic layer that was 0.08m thick.

### **7.4 TEST PIT 4 (Section 4)**

- 7.4.1 A 0.7m thick layer of made ground at 3.2m OD, dating from the early century, overlay three further layers with a combined thickness of 0.62m OD.

## **8 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS**

### **8.1 DISCUSSION**

- 8.1.1 The watching brief revealed layers of probably made ground up to 1.66m thick. Only one was datable, to the early century.

### **8.2 CONCLUSIONS**

- 8.2.1 The investigation suggests that the area of the Site is composed of Post Medieval made ground. Although natural ground was not encountered, it was seen from work to the north to be at a height of approximately 1.8m OD. The hand augering at the Site reached heights ranging between 1.52m OD (Test Pit 3) and 1.78m OD (Test Pit 4), and therefore it is likely that the natural ground is only a little deeper than the limit of this investigation.

## **9 BIBLIOGRAPHY**

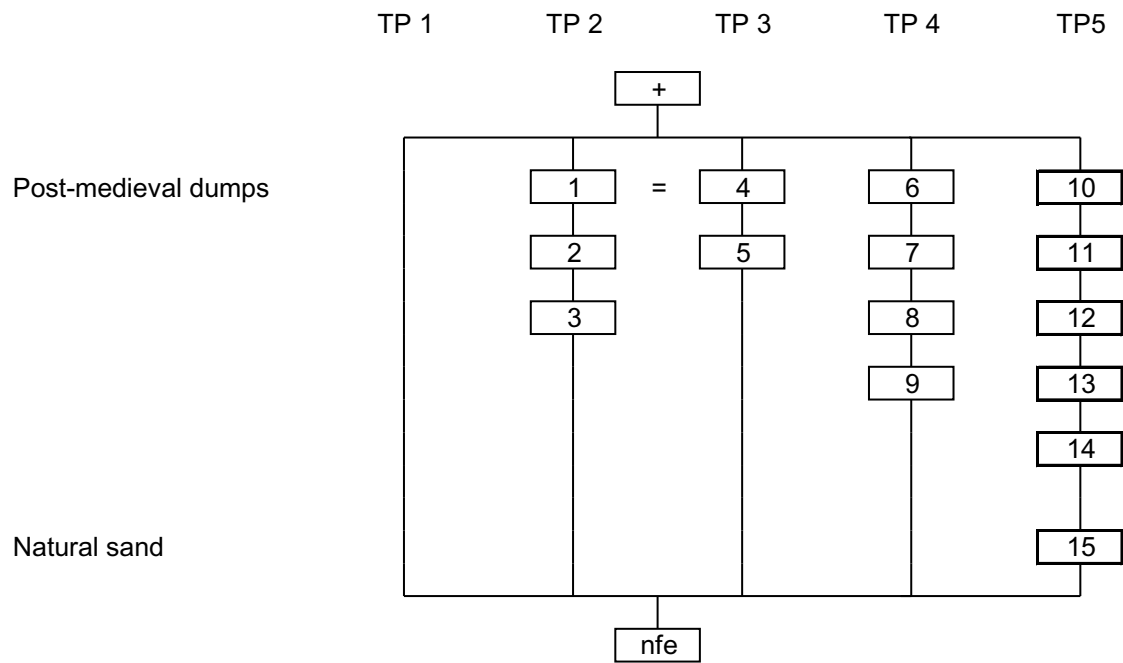
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Unpub rep for Pre-Construct Archaeol.

Bradley, T, 2004 'Method Statement for an Archaeological Watching Brief at 71- 79 Rochester  
Row, Westminster, SW1'. Unpub rep for Pre-Construct Archaeol.

## **10 ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

- 10.1 Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd. would like to thank Richard Meagre of CgMs Consulting for commissioning the work, and Moss Architecture and Design for kindly funding it.
- 10.2 Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd. would also like to thank Diane Walls of GLAAS for monitoring the work.
- 10.3 The author would particularly like to thank Tim Bradley for his project management and Hayley Baxter for the illustrations. Thanks to Chris Jarrett for dating the artefacts.

## APPENDIX 1: MATRIX



APPENDIX 2: CONTEXT INDEX

Site	Context	Type	Description	Test pit	Plan	Section	Finds	Same as	Phase
RHW04	1	Layer	Made ground deposit?	2	TP2	2	*	4	2
RHW04	2	Layer	Made ground deposit? Poss redep natural	2	*	2	*	*	2
RHW04	3	Layer	Made ground deposit?	2	*	2	*	*	2
RHW04	4	Layer	Made ground deposit?	3	*	3	*	1	2
RHW04	5	Layer	Made ground deposit?	3	*	3	*	*	2
RHW04	6	Layer	Made ground deposit?	4	*	4	yes	*	2
RHW04	7	Layer	Made ground deposit? Poss redep natural	4	TP3	4	*	*	2
RHW04	8	Layer	Made ground deposit?	4	*	4	*	*	2
RHW04	9	Layer	Made ground deposit?	4	*	4	*	*	2
RHW04	10	Layer	Made ground deposit?	5	*	5	yes	*	2
RHW04	11	Layer	Made ground deposit?	5	*	5	yes	*	2
RHW04	12	Layer	Made ground deposit?	5	*	5	yes	*	2
RHW04	13	Layer	Made ground deposit?	5	*	5	yes	*	2
RHW04	14	Layer	Made ground deposit?	5	*	5	yes	*	2
RHW04	15	Layer	Natural sand	5	*	5	*	*	1



## APPENDIX 3: OASIS FORM

### 10.1 OASIS ID: preconst1-3971

#### Project details

Project name	Rochester Row
Short description of the project	An archaeological watching brief was conducted by Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd. at 71 - 79 Rochester Row, Westminster. The work was designed to assess the nature of ground conditions and any surviving remains if present, and was commissioned by CgMs Consulting on behalf of Moss Architecture and Design. The evaluation comprised the investigation of four geotechnical test pits. The underlying ground in three trenches was seen to be deposits of probable made ground, post-medieval in date. The natural strata was not observed in any trench.
Project dates	Start: 01-09-2004 End: 02-09-2004
Previous/future work	No / Yes
Any associated project reference codes	RHW04 - Sitecode
Type of project	Field evaluation
Site status	None
Current Land use	Industry and Commerce 3 - Retailing
Significant Finds	POTTERY Post Medieval
Methods & techniques	'Test Pits'
Development type	Urban residential (e.g. flats, houses, etc.)
Prompt	Planning condition
Position in the planning process	Not known / Not recorded

#### Project location

Country	England
Site location	GREATER LONDON CITY OF WESTMINSTER WESTMINSTER 71 - 79 Rochester Row

Postcode	SW1
Study area	250 Square metres
National grid reference	TQ 2944 7884 Point

#### **Project creators**

Name of Organisation	Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd
Project brief originator	Consultant
Project design originator	Tim Bradley
Project director/manager	Tim Bradley
Project supervisor	Chris Mayo
Sponsor or funding body	Developer

#### **Project archives**

Physical Archive recipient	LAARC
Physical Contents	'Animal Bones','Ceramics'
Physical Archive Exists?	Yes
Digital Archive recipient	LAARC
Digital Contents	'Stratigraphic'
Digital Media available	'Images vector','Spreadsheets','Text'
Digital Archive Exists?	Yes
Paper Archive recipient	LAARC
Paper Contents	'Stratigraphic'

Paper Media available	'Context sheet','Correspondence','Photograph','Plan','Report'
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Paper Archive Exists?	Yes
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**Project bibliography 1**

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