

**An Archaeological Watching Brief at Thames Water Site,  
Gordon House Road/Lissenden Gardens, London  
Borough of Camden, NW5**

**Site Code: LSG 09**

**Central National Grid Reference: TQ 2841 8572**

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**Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited, January 2009**

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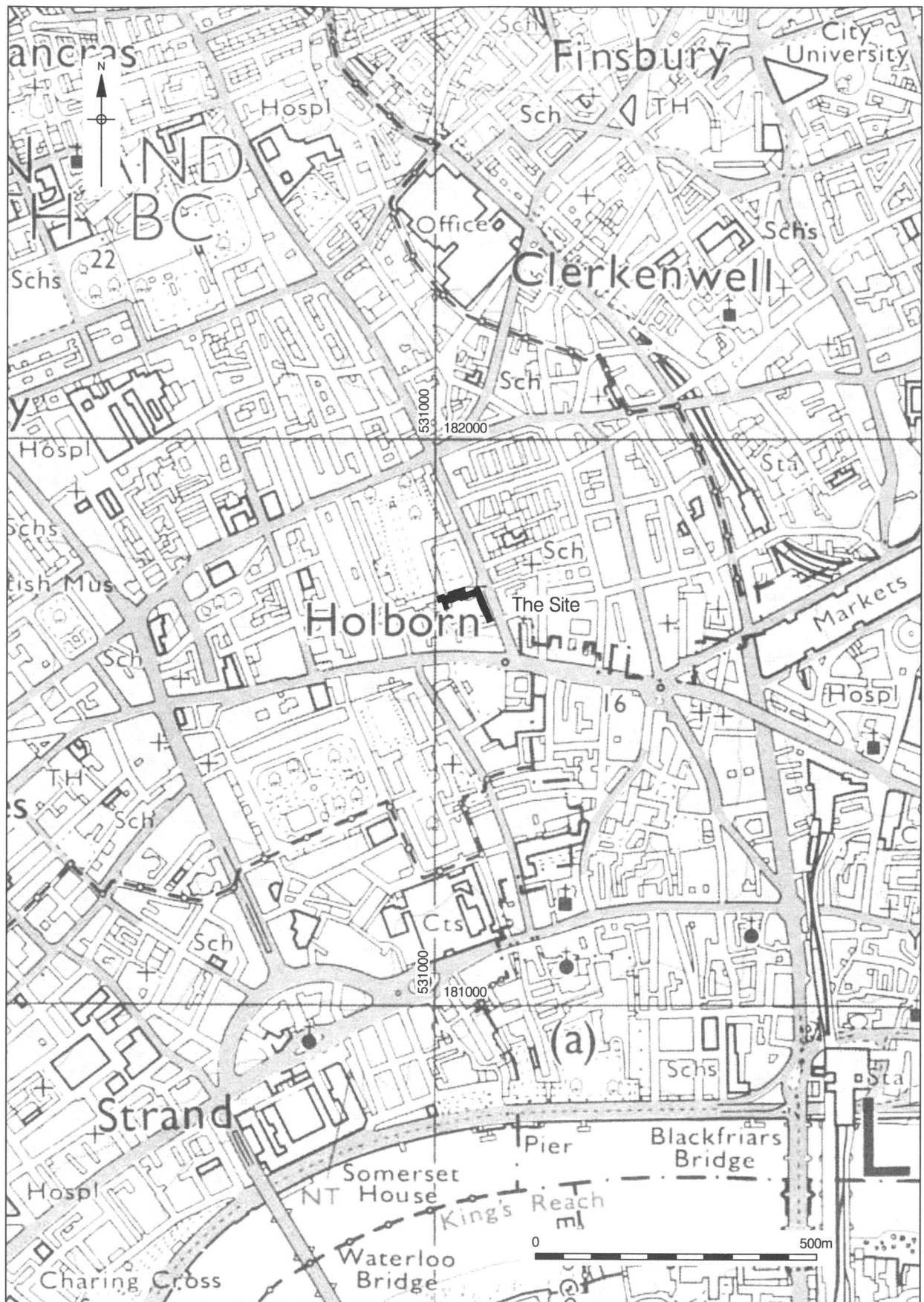
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## **1 ABSTRACT**

- 1.1 This report details the results of an archaeological watching brief undertaken at a Thames Water Site at the junction of Gordon House Road and Lissenden Gardens, London Borough of Camden. The site is centred at National Grid Reference TQ 2841 8572. The project was commissioned by CgMs Consulting on behalf of Thames Water and Pre-Construct Archaeology undertook the fieldwork on 16<sup>th</sup> December 2008 and 26<sup>th</sup> to 28<sup>th</sup> January 2009.
- 1.2 The area of development comprised two trial pits measuring 3.20m x 0.44m (Phase A) and 1.80m x 2m (Phase B). Ground reduction was monitored prior to the installation of a pressure control valve along existing pipelines.
- 1.3 The trial pits was excavated to maximum depths of 1.04m and 1.50m during phases A and B respectively. Natural London Clay was only identified within the second phase of works at around 40.60m OD.
- 1.4 The watching brief identified modern made ground within Phase A and extensive truncation and made ground within Phase B. These levelling deposits sealed natural clay, a late 19<sup>th</sup>/early 20<sup>th</sup> century dump layer and a cast iron water pipe of a contemporary date. No other archaeologically significant deposits were revealed.

## **2 INTRODUCTION**

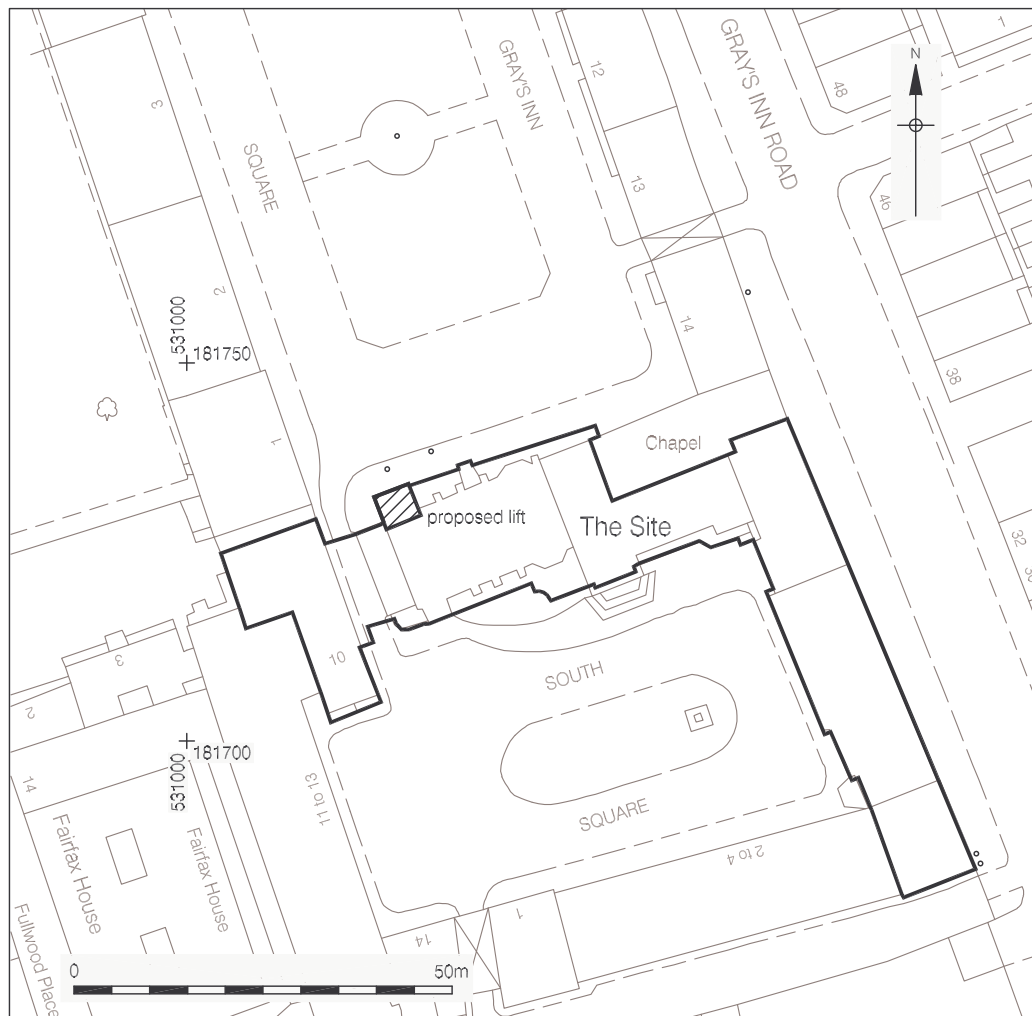
- 2.1 An archaeological watching brief was conducted by Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited at a Thames Water Site, at the junction between Lissenden Gardens and Gordon House Road, London Borough of Camden, NW5 on 16<sup>th</sup> December 2008 and between 26<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> January 2009. The work was commissioned by CgMs Consulting on behalf of Thames Water, was project managed for Pre-Construct Archaeology by Tim Bradley and supervised by the author.
- 2.2 The site is bounded to the south by Gordon House Road, and lies within Lissenden Gardens, bounded by a garage to the east and residential housing to the west.
- 2.3 The National Grid Reference of the Site is TQ 2841 8572
- 2.4 The site was assigned the code LSG 09.
- 2.5 The maximum depth of ground reduction was 1.04m during Phase A and 1.50m during Phase B, the latter exposing natural London Clay. The area under investigation comprised a trial pit 2m x 1.80m to expose water pipes prior to the installation of a pressure control valve (Phase B). The initial trial pit investigated during Phase A measured 3.20m x 0.44m and was abandoned due to extensive modern services, and lay entirely within the footprint of a former pipe trench.



Reproduced from Ordnance Survey 1:25,000. Crown Copyright 1987.

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Figure 1  
Site Location  
1:10 000



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Figure 2  
Detailed Site Location  
1:1000

### 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 London Borough of Camden Replacement Unitary Development Plan (Adopted June 2006). The adopted Plan 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 The policy goes on to state that:

**3.77** *When researching the development potential of a site, developers should, in all cases assess whether the site is known or likely to contain archaeological remains. Where there is good reason to believe that there are remains of archaeological importance on a site, the Council will consider directing applicants to supply further details of proposed developments, including the results of archaeological deskbased assessment and field evaluation, under the provisions of Article 3 (2) of the Town and Country Planning (General Development Procedure) Order 1995.*

**3.78** *Within archaeological priority areas and for sites of archaeological potential, the Council may require an archaeological field evaluation to be carried out before a planning application is determined. If important archaeological remains are found, developers should adopt measures that allow the remains to be permanently preserved in situ. Where the preservation of such remains in situ cannot be achieved the Council will require that no development shall take place until satisfactory excavation and recording of the remains have been carried out on site by an archaeological organisation approved by the Council. In appropriate cases, the*

*Council may grant planning permission subject to conditions, or seek voluntary agreements, to cover such matters, including making provision for access, interpretation and display for public benefit during excavation and publication of the recorded results. Recorded results should also be provided by the developer for inclusion in the Greater London Sites and Monuments Record. Where developers do not propose due provision for accommodating important archaeological remains, planning permission may be refused.*

- 3.5 The subject site does not lie within an archaeological priority zone as identified by the London Borough of Camden.



## **4 GEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND**

- 4.1 The British Geological Survey Map 256 of the area (1:50,000 series) indicates that the underlying drift geology comprises London Clay.
- 4.2 The site lies at the junction between Gordon House Road and Lissenden Gardens at approximately 42m OD.

## **5 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

### **5.1 Prehistoric**

- 5.1.1 Limited finds of prehistoric material derive from the adjacent Hampstead Heath, and include Mesolithic flints and evidence of the Holocene environment. These derive from excavations at Sandy Road [WH 76] and archaeological monitoring during a gas pipeline within Hampstead Heath [BGP 92]. Both sites lay some distance to the west of the subject site.

### **5.2 Roman/Saxon**

- 5.2.1 Due to the limited numbers of archaeological investigations within the localised vicinity, it is therefore unsurprising that very few find spots of Roman or Saxon material have been identified. Excavations and watching briefs within Hampstead Heath, as mentioned previously [WH 76, BGP 92] have yielded Roman coins and Saxon artefacts. Furthermore, fragments of disassociated Roman pottery have been found within post-medieval cut features during evaluations and excavations at Mount Vernon Hospital [MTV 95] to the west of the study site. These may suggest a limited Roman presence within the area.

### **5.3 Medieval**

- 5.3.1 The line of Highgate Road and Highgate Hill, running north-south to the east of the subject site, are believed to have had medieval antecedents (MLO17832, TQ 2865 8585).
- 5.3.2 Similarly to previous periods, evidence of medieval occupation or exploitation of the localised vicinity is scant. The Gospel Oak area remained predominantly rural, occupied by watercress beds until the 19<sup>th</sup> century<sup>1</sup>. Evidence is therefore likely to be limited to field systems and boundary ditches. Such features were identified during excavations to the west of the study site at Mount Vernon Hospital [MTV 95]. Gullies, postholes and pits were recorded, and believed to relate to the remnants of medieval field systems and associated fence lines.

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<sup>1</sup> Weinreb and Hibbert, 1983, p326

## **5.4 Post Medieval**

5.4.1 Gordon House Lane was laid out by 1873 as illustrated on the 1<sup>st</sup> edition Ordnance Survey Map, and a Nursery comprising a number of glasshouses are shown occupying the land around the site. Lissenden Gardens was laid out by 1915 and is illustrated on the 3<sup>rd</sup> edition Ordnance Survey Map of the area. It is therefore possible that ground reduction in preparation for these developments truncated earlier archaeological horizons.

5.4.2 The majority of archaeological investigations within the immediate vicinity denote post-medieval features, deposits and structural remains. Investigations along Grafton Road [GGR 75] and Crown Place [CPL 03] for example identified only 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century debris.

## **6      ARCHAEOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY**

- 6.1      The areas to be reduced were laid out by the groundwork contractors in accordance with the proposed development plan. The ground reduction was machine excavated by the contractors with a flat bladed ditching bucket, in advance of the installation of a control pressure valve.
- 6.2      All ground reduction was monitored by the attendant archaeologist so that any archaeological deposits could be excavated and recorded stratigraphically.
- 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".
- 6.4      The completed archive, including all artefactual, written, drawn and photographic material, will be deposited with the London Archaeological Archive and Research Centre (LAARC).

## **7 SUMMARY OF THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SEQUENCE**

### **7.1 Phase A:**

- 7.1.1 Excavations during Phase A comprised a 3.20m x 0.44m x 1.04m depth trial pit. This excavation lay entirely within the footprint of a modern pipe trench and therefore only modern made ground was observed. This comprised 100mm thickness of tarmac, overlying concrete and rubble.

### **7.2 Phase B:**

- 7.2.1 An area 2m x 1.80m x 1.50m depth was excavated during the Phase B works. Extensive truncation by modern services was observed.
- 7.2.2 Natural London Clay was identified at approximately 40.60m OD and recorded as deposit [3]. This extended the full length of the trial pit and was observed to 0.10m thickness. The layer appeared sterile and therefore natural, but the possibility of re-deposition cannot be entirely ruled out.
- 7.2.3 Sealing [3] was a 0.24m thick dump layer, recorded as deposit [2]. This comprised of a loose, mid greyish-brown silty clay containing frequent inclusions of small angular gravel and occasional small pottery fragments of late 19<sup>th</sup>/early 20<sup>th</sup> century date. This deposit was interpreted as a late 19<sup>th</sup> century or early 20<sup>th</sup> century dump or levelling layer. Overlying dump layer [3] was feature [1], a cast iron water pipe with a diameter of 100mm, extending east-west across the pit. This was encountered at a height of 41.34m OD and interpreted as a contemporary late 19<sup>th</sup> to early 20<sup>th</sup> century water pipe. Later modern truncations had removed any traces of the construction cut.
- 7.2.4 The trial pit was subsequently sealed by a 1.40m depth of made ground. This comprised 0.56m thickness of gravel containing associated Thames Water pipes, overlain by 0.74m thickness of mixed rubble and concrete, capped by the 100mm thick tarmac road surface.

## **8 INTERPRETATIONS AND CONCLUSION**

- 8.1 The watching brief was intended to identify and record archaeological material during trial pitting prior to the insertion of a control pressure valve upon pre-existing Thames Water pipes. The principal objective was to determine the presence or otherwise of any archaeological activity on site.
- 8.2 Natural London Clay was identified during Phase B of the watching brief at around 40.60m OD.
- 8.3 Overlying natural clay was a dump layer and east-west orientated cast iron pipe, both dating from the late 19<sup>th</sup> or early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. These were subsequently sealed by a significant depth of modern made ground. The area of investigation had been severely truncated by modern services.

## **9 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

- 9.1 Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd would like to thank CgMs Consulting for commissioning the work on behalf of Thames Water.
- 9.2 The author would like to thank Lorraine Darton, CgMs Consulting, for monitoring the work on behalf of Thames Water, Mark Roughley for the illustrations, and Tim Bradley for his project managing and editing.

## 10 BIBLIOGRAPHY

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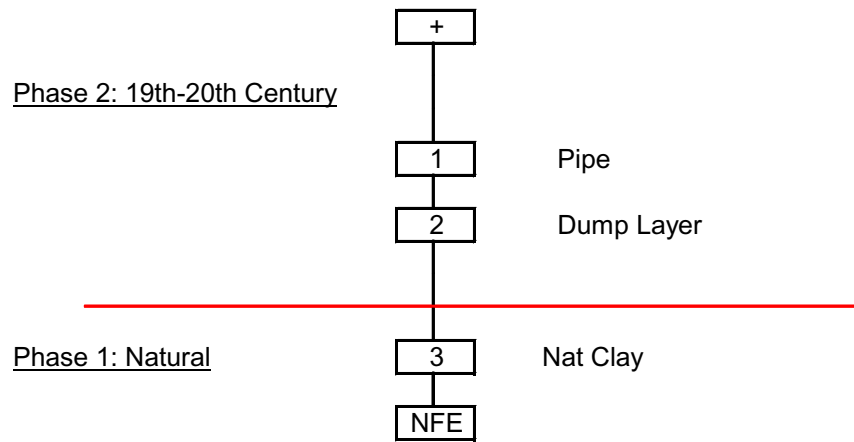
Weinreb, B and Hibbert, C, *The London Encyclopaedia*, Macmillan: London



## APPENDIX 1: CONTEXT REGISTER

Context Number	Trench	Plan Number	Section Number	Phase	Type	Description	Highest	Lowest
1	Phase II	Post-Ex	1	2	Pipe	E-W Cast iron C19th/C20th pipe	41.34	
2	Phase II	-	1	2	Layer	Dump Layer/Made Ground	40.84	
3	Phase II	Post-Ex	1, 2	1	Layer	Nat - London Clay	40.6	

## APPENDIX 2: MATRIX



### APPENDIX 3: OASIS DATA COLLECTION FORM

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OASIS ID: preconst1-54658

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#### Project details

Project name	Thames Water Site: Gordon House/Lissenden Gardens, London Borough of Camden, NW5
Short description of the project	An archaeological watching brief of groundworks at the junction of Lissenden Gardens and Gordon House Road for the installation of a pressure control valve for Thames Water. Extensive modern truncations and made ground deposits were observed, sealing natural London Clay, a dump layer of probable late 19th to early 20th century date, and a roughly contemporary east-west orientated cast iron pipe.
Project dates	Start: 16-12-2008 End: 28-01-2009
Previous/future work	Not known / Not known
Any associated project reference codes	LSG 09 - Sitecode
Type of project	Recording project
Site status	Conservation Area
Current Land use	Transport and Utilities 1 - Highways and road transport
Monument type	WATER PIPE Modern
Investigation type	'Watching Brief'
Prompt	Direction from Local Planning Authority - PPG16

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#### Project location

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Country	England
Site location	GREATER LONDON CAMDEN HAMPSTEAD Thames Water Site: Gordon House Road/Lissenden Gardens
Postcode	NW5
Study area	2.00 Square metres
Site coordinates	TQ 2841 8572 51.5552395464 -0.147559605877 51 33 18 N 000 08 51 W Point
Height OD / Depth	Min: 40.50m Max: 40.60m

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### Project creators

Name of Organisation	Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd
Project originator brief	CgMs Consulting
Project originator design	Lorraine Darton
Project director/manager	Tim Bradley
Project supervisor	Amelia Fairman
Name of sponsor/funding body	Thames Water

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### Project bibliography 1

Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	Thames Water Site: Gordon House Road/Lissenden Gardens, London Borough of Camden, NW5

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Author(s)/Editor(s)	Fairman, A
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Issuer or publisher	Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd
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Description	A4 folio

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