An Archaeological Watching Brief at Marble Arch, City of Westminster, W1

Site Code: MBQ09

Central National Grid Reference: TQ 277 810

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Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited, June 2009

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1 ABSTRACT

1.1 An archaeological watching brief was undertaken between 2nd June and 14th June 2009 at Marble Arch, City of Westminster W1, by Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited. The evaluation was commissioned by Hyder Consulting.

1.2 Archaeological monitoring was required on eleven draw pits, which were excavated to facilitate the installation of new lighting, and ground reduction to enable the insertion of new surfacing for the piazza adjacent to the arch.

1.3 No discrete archaeological deposits were encountered beneath the surface of the piazza either during monitoring of the draw pits or ground reduction. The deposits recorded beneath the piazza were composed of two distinct layers of late post-medieval/early modern made ground.

2 INTRODUCTION

2.1 This report details the results and working methods of an archaeological watching brief undertaken by Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd. at Marble Arch, City of Westminster, W1 (Figure 1) between 2nd June and 14th June 2009. The site comprised the piazza surrounding Marble Arch itself. The site boundaries were defined by Cumberland Gate to the south, Tyburn Way to the west, the junction of Cumberland Place and Marble Arch to the north and Park Lane to the east.

2.2 The requirements for the archaeological watching brief were outlined in the Written Scheme of Investigation[1]. These included the monitoring of the excavation of eleven draw pits for the installation of new lighting and ground reduction of the piazza adjacent to arch prior to the insertion of new surfacing (Fig. 2). The watching brief was commissioned by Hyder Consulting, project managed for Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd. by Helen Hawkins and the work carried out by James Young Langthorne. The site was monitored by Diane Walls (English Heritage GLAAS), archaeological advisor to the City of Westminster.

2.3 The National Grid Reference of the site was TQ 277 810

2.4 The site was given the code MBQ09.

[1] Hawkins 2009

Figure 1
Site Location
1:20,000 at A4

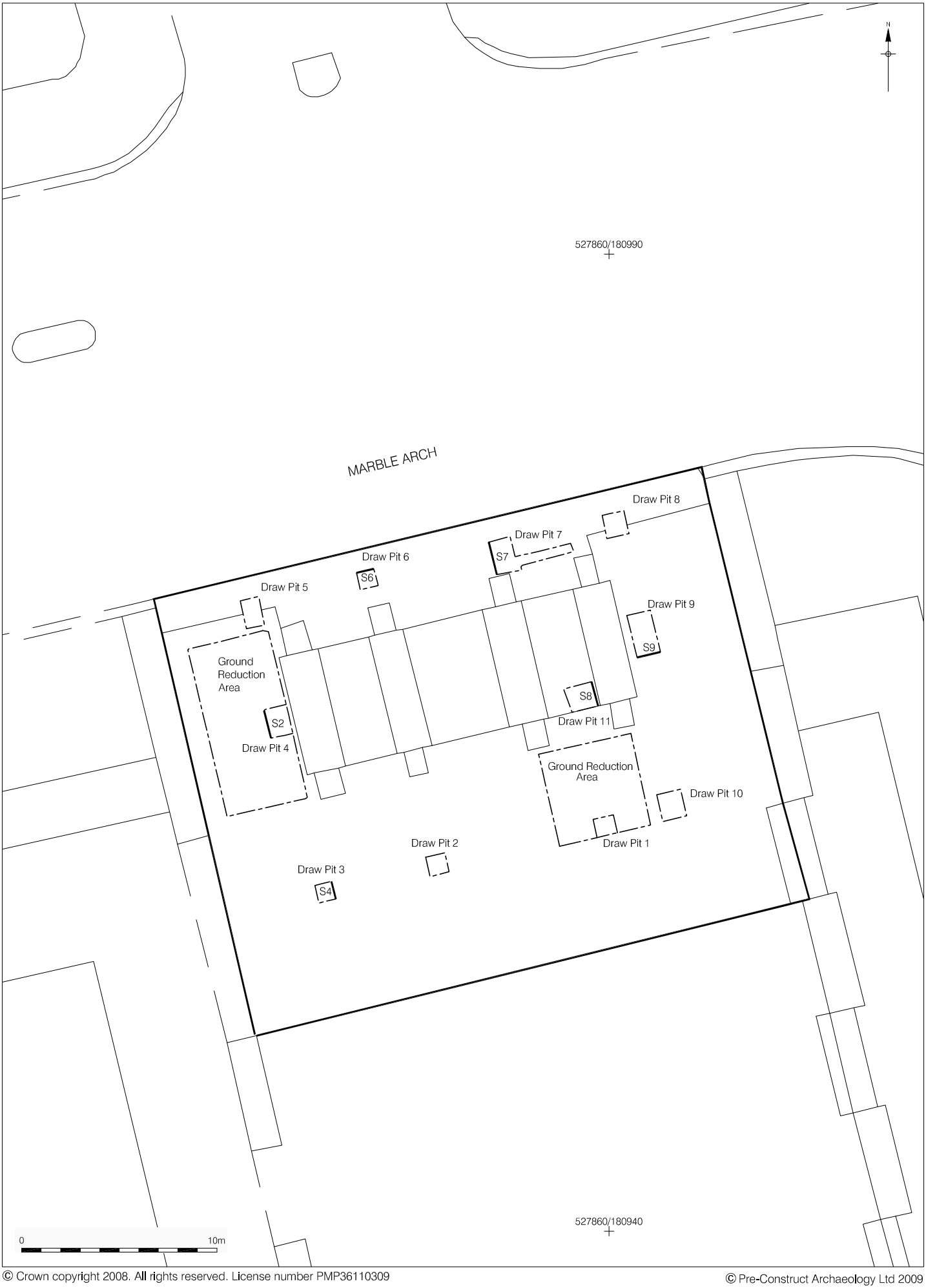


Figure 2
Trench Location
1:250 at A4

3 PLANNING BACKGROUND

3.1 The proposed development for the site consisted of ground reduction in the piazza immediately surrounding Marble Arch prior to the insertion of new surfacing and the excavation of eleven draw pits to accommodate new lighting for the arch. These excavations had the potential to impact on any possible archaeological deposits extant within the boundaries of the site.

3.2 ARCHAEOLOGY IN WESTMINSTER AND THE UNITARY DEVELOPMENT PLAN

3.2.1 The study aims to satisfy the objectives of the City of Westminster, which fully recognises the importance of the buried heritage for which they are the custodians. The City's 'Replacement Unitary Development Plan' (RUDP) (adopted December 2004) contains policy statements in respect of protecting the buried archaeological resource.

3.2.2 The proposed development of the site is subject to the Council's Archaeology Policy:

POLICY DES 18 - Archaeology

(A) The City Council will promote the conservation, protection and enhancement of the archaeological heritage of Westminster and its interpretation and presentation to the public. Where development may affect land of known or potential archaeological importance, the City Council will expect applicants to properly assess and plan for the archaeological implications of their proposals. The policies in (B) and (C) below may apply elsewhere where the archaeological evidence suggests that this would be appropriate.

(B) Within the City Council's areas of special archaeological priority a written assessment of the likely archaeological impact of development (archaeological statement) will normally be required as part of the documentation needed to complete a planning application, whenever it is proposed to carry out any excavations or other ground works

(C) Within the areas of special archaeological priority the City Council may request, where necessary information cannot be supplied by other means, that an on-site assessment by trial work (archaeological field evaluation) is carried out before any decision on the planning application is taken.

(D) The City Council will seek to ensure that nationally important archaeological remains and their settings are permanently preserved in situ and where appropriate are given statutory protection. In such cases, if preservation in situ is both desirable and feasible, the City Council will normally require the development design to accommodate this objective.

(E) Where the preservation of archaeological remains in situ is inappropriate, the City Council will require that no development takes place on a site until

archaeological investigations have been carried out by a reputable investigating body. Such investigations shall be in accordance with a detailed scheme to be approved in advance by the City Council.

3.2.3 The Westminster RUDP mirrors advice contained in the Department of Environment document 'Planning Policy Guidance: Archaeology and Planning (PPG 16)'. This document identifies the need for early consultation in the planning process to determine the impact of the construction schemes upon buried archaeological strata.

3.2.4 Marble Arch is a Grade I Listed Building, however the groundworks on the site do not impact on the structure itself but with the piazza that surrounds it. Additionally the site is not located within an archaeological priority area as defined by the Borough's Local Plan

4 GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY

4.1 Geology

4.1.1 British Geological Survey Sheet 256 (North London – 1:50,000 Series for England and Wales) shows the site's geological sequence as consisting of a basal geology of Cretaceous Upper Chalk overlain by Thanet Sands and Lambeth Group (Woolwich and Reading Beds) deposits of Palaeocene age. These are overlain by Eocene London Clay and the sequence is capped by Terrace Gravels of the Lynch Hill (4th Terrace) Formation. Directly to the east of the site a brickearth cap of Langley Silt is indicated.

4.1.2 There has been no recent geological survey performed on or near the site.

4.2 Topography

4.2.1 The site is located on flat ground, which lies at an approximate height of 24.15m OD The site is approximately 800m north of The Serpentine which runs through Hyde Park.

5 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

5.1 The archaeological and historical background to the site was briefly summarised in the Written Scheme of Investigation[2]. The following chapter reiterates that study with additional material.

5.2 Prehistoric

5.2.1 Present day Oxford Street and Edgware Road are both aligned along pre-Roman tracks which were constructed along high ground to avoid marshy areas. However both of these routes were superseded by later Roman roads (see below).

5.2.2 The archaeological potential for prehistoric activity was therefore **low**.

5.3 Roman

5.3.1 The study site is located at the junction of two Roman roads: Watling Street which ran from Londinium (London) to Verulamium (St Albans) and a second road which ran along the same alignment as present day Oxford Street to Camulodunum (Colchester). Therefore parts of either or both roads or associated features may be present within the site itself.

5.3.2 A monument known as Oswulf's or Oswald's Stone, which was considered to have originally been a Roman geometric stone, stood on the site until 1821 at which time it was covered over. The stone was re-excavated shortly after the Marble Arch was moved to the site and propped up against the arch. However it was removed in 1869 and its current whereabouts is unknown[3].

5.3.3 The potential for Roman material was therefore **low-moderate**

5.4 Medieval

5.4.1 The site is referred to in the Domesday book as lying within the parish of Marylebone as part of the manor of St Mary's Church by the Bourne, an appellation that was later shortened to Ty Bourne and eventually Tyburn.

5.4.2 Tyburn village itself lay a short distance to the east of the site, which remained a crossroads.

5.4.3 The potential for medieval activity was therefore considered to be **low-moderate**.

5.5 Post-Medieval

5.5.1 The junction between Edgware Road and Bayswater Road, a short distance to the west of the site, was the point at which the gallows, the infamous Tyburn Tree, was meant to have stood from 1571 until 1759 when it was replaced by a movable gallows. This change was necessitated by the construction of a Tollhouse for the turnpike road. During the 18th century Oxford Street was called Tyburn Road and Park Lane was known as Tyburn Lane. The increasingly residential nature of Oxford Street sounded the death knell for the gallows and on 3rd November 1783 John Austin, a highwayman, became the last person to be publicly executed at Tyburn.

5.5.2 Marble Arch was constructed in 1828 on The Mall as a gateway to the new Buckingham Palace. Its designer, John Nash had modelled the structure after the triumphal arch of Constantine in Rome. However it was relocated in 1851 to its present position during building works to the east front of the Palace.

5.5.3 The Arch contains 3 small rooms, which served as a police station, initially for the Royal Constables of the Park and latterly for the Metropolitan Police until 1950.

5.5.4 The potential for post-medieval activity was therefore considered to be **moderate-high**.

[2] Hawkins 2009
[3] www.british-history.ac.uk

6 ARCHAEOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY

6.1 In accordance with the Written Statement of Investigation[4], all ground reduction and the excavation of eleven draw pits were to be monitored in order to determine the location, form, extent, date, character, condition, significance and quality of any surviving archaeological remains liable to be removed by the proposed development.

6.2 The flagstones of the piazza were removed by hand and then the concrete beneath was broken out by machine. This sufficed for the ground reduction, however in the case of the draw pits further excavation was performed by hand. All excavations were archaeologically monitored. The draw pits were then cleaned by hand and recorded in both plan and section, with plans recorded at a scale of 1:50 and sections recorded at a scale of 1:10. The single context system was used for all recording on the site.

6.3 Much of the ground reduction within the piazza did not fully penetrate the concrete that underlay the flagstones. The concrete was only fully broken out in the eleven draw pits and in two areas of general ground reduction: to the west of the arch and to the southeast of the arch (Figure 2).

6.4 The table below summarises the dimensions of the eleven draw pits:

Trench	North-South (m)	East-West (m)	Depth (m)
1	1.01	0.92	0.52
2	1.08	0.97	0.52
3	0.88	0.98	0.48
4	1.49	1.23	0.82
5	1.09	1.02	0.82
6	0.82	1.10	0.66
7	1.67	3.85	0.55
8	1.30	1.22	0.75
9	2.15	1.25	0.76
10	1.38	1.50	0.59
11	1.30	1.45	0.61

6.5 The area of ground reduction that penetrated the concrete to the west of the arch measured 8.80m north-south by 4.25m east-west and reached a maximum depth of 0.43m below ground level.

6.6 The area of ground reduction that penetrated the concrete to the southeast of the arch measured 4.70m north-south by 4.80m east-west and reached a maximum depth of 0.44m below ground level.

6.7 Natural deposits were not encountered at the base of any of the excavations.

[4] Hawkins 2009

7 ARCHAEOLOGICAL DESCRIPTION

7.1 Draw Pit 1 (Figure 2)

7.1.1 No discrete archaeological deposits were found in Draw Pit 1.

7.1.2 A 0.41m thick layer of modern concrete [+] was seen to be sealed by a thin layer of bedding sand [+] and Yorkstone paving slabs [+].

7.2 Draw Pit 2 (Figure 2)

7.2.1 No discrete archaeological deposits were found in Draw Pit 2.

7.2.2 A 0.40m thick layer of modern concrete [+] was seen to be sealed by a 0.04m thick layer of concrete [+] and paving slabs [+].

7.3 Draw Pit 3 (Figures. 2 & 3)

7.3.1 No discrete archaeological deposits were found in Draw Pit 3.

7.3.2 The earliest deposit encountered at the base of Draw Pit 3 was [1], a fairly firm layer of mid reddish grey-brown silty sand with frequent small-medium sized angular and subrounded pebbles and moderate CBM flecks and fragments. CBM recovered from the fill dated this layer from the 19th-early 20th century. Recorded at a depth of 0.43m below ground level (BGL), it was interpreted as a deposit of late post-medieval/early modern made ground.

7.3.3 Made Ground [1] was sealed by modern concrete [+].

7.4 Draw Pit 4 (Figures 2 & 3)

7.4.1 No discrete archaeological deposits were found in Draw Pit 4.

7.4.2 The earliest archaeological deposit encountered in Draw Pit 4 was [2], a 0.15m thick fairly loose layer of mid greyish yellow slightly silty sand and angular gravel with occasional-moderate CBM flecks and fragments. This layer was interpreted as late post-medieval made ground and was recorded at a depth of 0.66m BGL.

7.4.3 Made ground [2] was sealed by a 0.19m thick layer of made ground [1], which was overlain by concrete [+].

7.5 Draw Pit 5 (Figure 2)

7.5.1 No discrete archaeological deposits were found in Draw Pit 5.

7.5.2 A 0.71m thick layer of modern concrete [+] was seen to be sealed by a thin layer of tarmac [+] and paving slabs [+].

7.6 Draw Pit 6 (Figures 2 & 3)

7.6.1 No discrete archaeological deposits were found in Draw Pit 6.

7.6.2 The earliest deposit encountered in Draw Pit 6 was a 0.14m thick layer of made ground [1] at a depth of 0.52m BGL. The made ground was overlain by a 0.40m thick layer of concrete [+], which was subsequently sealed by bedding sand [+] and flagstones [+].

7.7 Draw Pit 7 (Figures 2 & 3)

7.7.1 No discrete archaeological deposits were encountered in Draw Pit 7.

7.7.2 The earliest deposit encountered in Draw Pit 6 was a 0.11m thick layer of made ground [1] at a depth of 0.41m BGL. Made ground [1] was subsequently overlain by concrete [+].

7.8 Draw Pit 8 (Figures 2 & 3)

7.8.1 No discrete archaeological deposits were recorded in Draw Pit 8.

7.8.2 The earliest deposit encountered in Draw Pit 6 was a 0.05m thick layer of made ground [2] at a depth of 0.71m BGL. Made ground [2] was subsequently overlain by later made ground [1], which was 0.29m thick, and sealed by concrete [+] and flagstones [+].

7.9 Draw Pit 9 (Figure 2)

7.9.1 No discrete archaeological deposits were recorded in Draw Pit 9.

7.9.2 The earliest deposit encountered in Draw Pit 9 was a 0.32m thick layer of made ground [1] at a depth of 0.43m BGL. Made ground [1] was subsequently overlain by concrete [+] and flagstones [+].

7.10 Draw Pit 10 (Figure 2)

7.10.1 No discrete archaeological deposits were recorded in Draw Pit 10.

7.10.2 The earliest deposit encountered in Draw Pit 10 was a 0.10m thick layer of made ground [1] at a depth of 0.48m BGL. Made ground [1] was subsequently overlain by concrete [+] and flagstones [+].

7.11 Draw Pit 11 (Figure 2 & 3)

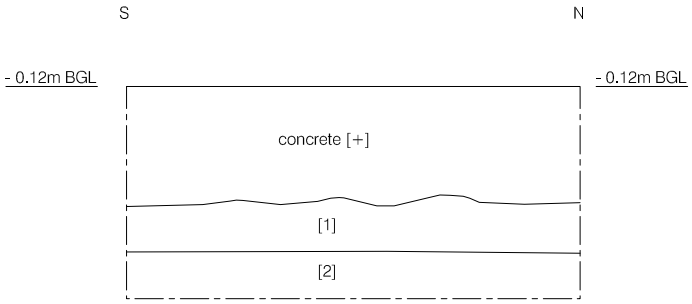
7.11.1 No discrete archaeological deposits were encountered in Draw Pit 11.

7.11.2 The earliest deposit encountered in Draw Pit 10 was a 0.33m thick layer of made ground [1] at a depth of 0.27m BGL. Made ground [1] was subsequently overlain by concrete [+] and flagstones [+].

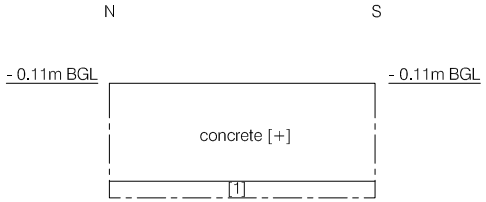
7.12 Ground Reduction (Figure 2)

7.12.1 No discrete archaeological deposits were encountered during the ground reduction of the piazza.

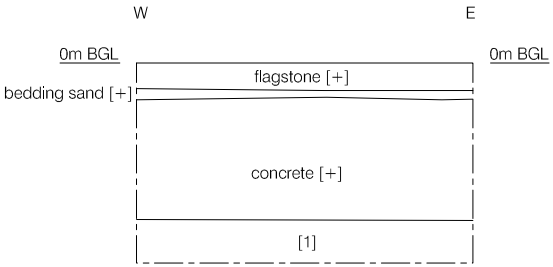
7.12.2 The earliest deposit recorded was made ground [1] which was encountered to the west and southeast of the arch at a maximum depth of 0.43m BGL. The made ground was sealed by concrete [+], which was subsequently overlain by bedding sand [+] and Yorkstone flagstones [+].



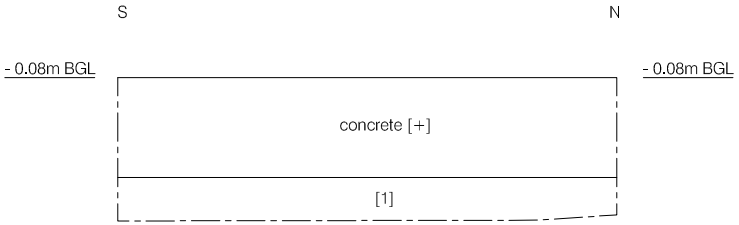
Section 2
Draw Pit 4
East Facing



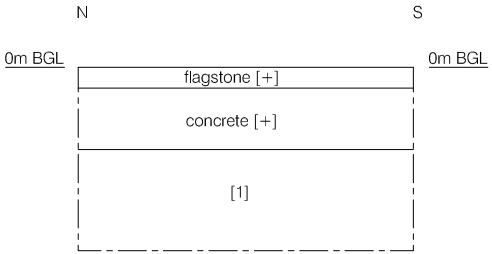
Section 4
Draw Pit 3
West Facing



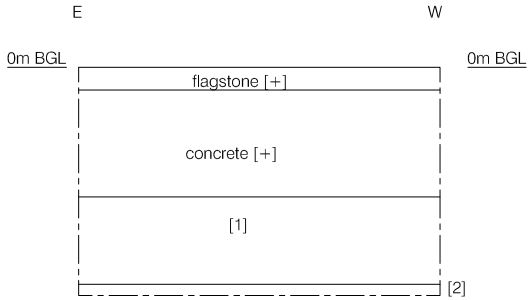
Section 6
Draw Pit 6
South Facing



Section 7
Draw Pit 7
East Facing



Section 8
Draw Pit 11
West Facing



Section 9
Draw Pit 8
North Facing

Figure 3
Sections
1:25 at A4

8 INTERPRETATION AND CONCLUSIONS

8.1 Interpretation

8.1.1 No natural deposits were revealed in either the draw pits or during the general ground reduction of the piazza.

8.1.2 The earliest deposits recorded on site were post-medieval and early modern made ground layers which were encountered in the eight of the eleven draw pits (Draw Pits 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11) and during the deeper ground reductions to the west and south-east of the arch.

8.1.3 In the remaining three draw pits (Draw Pits 1, 2 and 5) and during the bulk of the ground reduction around the piazza the earliest deposit encountered was concrete.

8.2 Conclusions

8.2.1 It has been clearly shown by the watching brief that archaeological deposits from the post-medieval and early modern periods are extant on the site to a depth of 0.82m BGL.

8.2.2 Since natural deposits were not observed during any of the excavations on site there is still potential for archaeological deposits of an early date to be extant beneath the piazza.

9 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

9.1 Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited would like to thank Hyder Consulting for commissioning the work, for their support and for funding the work. Thanks also to Diane Walls of the Greater London Archaeology Advisory Service (GLAAS) for her help and advice.

9.2 The author would like to thank the team from Conway for their assistance on site; Jennifer Simonson for the illustrations; Kevin Hayward for spot dating the CBM recovered from the site and Helen Hawkins for her project management and editing.

10 BIBLIOGRAPHY

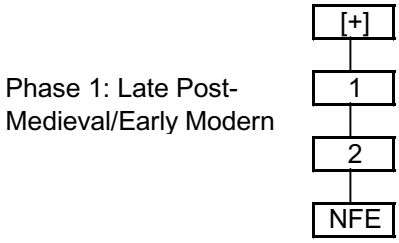
Hawkins, H. 2009. *Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Watching Brief at Marble Arch, City of Westminster.* Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd unpublished report.

Internet resource: www.british-history.ac.uk-reportaspx?compid=22489

APPENDIX 1 – CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

Site Code	Context No.	Plan	Section / Elevation	Type	Description	Date	Phase
MBQ09	1	N/A	S2, S4, S6-S11	Layer	Made Ground	Late post-medieval/ Early modern	1
MBQ09	2	N/A	S2 & S9	Layer	Made Ground	Late post-medieval	1

APPENDIX 2 – SITE MATRIX



APPENDIX 3 – OASIS FORM

OASIS ID: preconst1-60827

Project details

Project name	An Archaeological Watching Brief at Marble Arch, City of Westminster
Short description of the project	An archaeological watching brief was performed by PCA on eleven draw pits, which were dug to facilitate the installation of new lighting, and ground reduction to enable the insertion of new surfacing for the piazza adjacent to Marble Arch. No discrete archaeological deposits were encountered beneath the surface of the piazza either during monitoring of the draw pits or ground reduction. The deposits recorded beneath the piazza were composed of two distinct layers of late post-medieval/early modern made ground.
Project dates	Start: 02-06-2009 End: 14-06-2009
Previous/future work	No / No
Any associated project reference codes	MBQ09 - Sitecode
Type of project	Recording project
Site status	None
Current Land use	Other 8 - Land dedicated to the display of a monument
Monument type	MADE GROUND Post Medieval
Monument type	MADE GROUND Modern
Investigation type	'Watching Brief'
Prompt	Direction from Local Planning Authority - PPG16

Project location

Country	England
Site location	GREATER LONDON CITY OF WESTMINSTER MARYLEBONE ST

	JOHNS WOOD AND MAYFAIR Marble Arch
Postcode	W1
Study area	500.00 Square metres
Site coordinates	TQ 277 810 51.5129786678 -0.159508563284 51 30 46 N 000 09 34 W Point

Project creators

Name of Organisation	Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd
Project brief originator	Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd
Project design originator	Helen Hawkins
Project director/manager	Helen Hawkins
Project supervisor	James Langthorne
Type of sponsor/funding body	Hyder Consulting

Project archives

Physical Archive Exists?	No
Digital Archive Exists?	No
Digital Contents	'none'
Paper Archive recipient	LAARC
Paper Archive ID	MBQ09

Paper Contents	'none'
Paper Media available	'Context sheet','Correspondence','Map','Plan','Section','Unpublished Text'

Project bibliography 1

Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	An Archaeological Watching Brief at Marble Arch, City of Westminster, W1
Author(s)/Editor(s)	Langthorne, J.
Date	2009
Issuer or publisher	Pre-Construct Archaeology
Place of issue or publication	London
Description	A4 softcover grey literature report.

Entered by	archivist (archive@pre-construct.com)
Entered on	16 June 2009