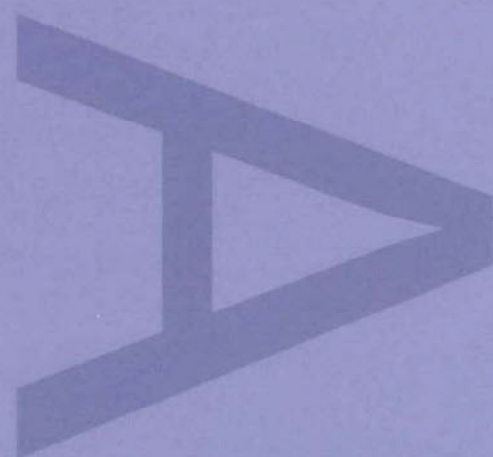
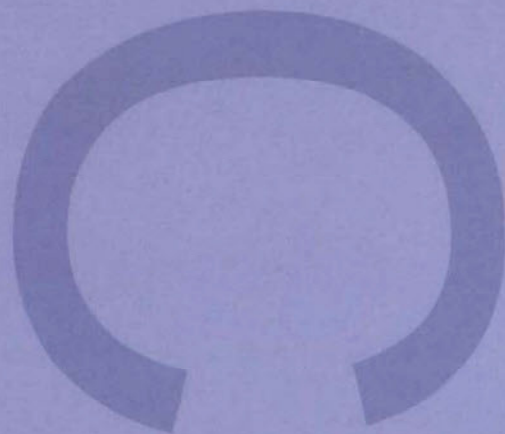
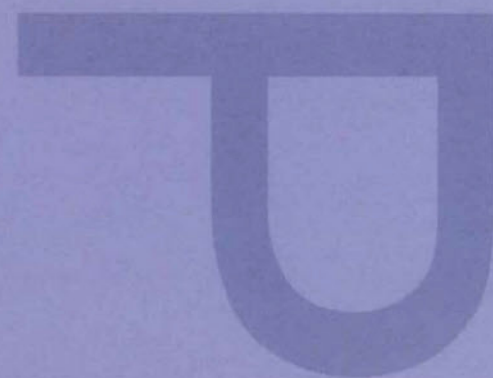


**AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL  
WATCHING BRIEF AT THE  
IRONMONGER ROW BATHS, 1-11  
IRONMONGER ROW, LONDON  
BOROUGH OF ISLINGTON, EC1V  
3QF**

**NOVEMBER 2009**



PRE-CONSTRUCT ARCHAEOLOGY

## DOCUMENT VERIFICATION

### Site Name

Ironmonger Row Baths, 1-11 Ironmonger Row,  
London Borough of Islington

### Type of project

Archaeological Watching Brief

#### Quality Control

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*Archaeological Watching Brief*

**An Archaeological Watching Brief at Ironmonger Row Baths, 1-11  
Ironmonger Row, London Borough of Islington, EC1V 3QF**

**IRB 09**

**Central National Grid Reference: TQ 3225 8258**

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## 1 Introduction

1.1 This report details the results of an archaeological watching brief undertaken at Ironmonger Row Baths, Old Street, London Borough of Islington. A geotechnical investigation was being undertaken by Ground Engineering Limited at the site in advance of the proposed renovation works, and a total of ten test pits, two boreholes and one window sample hole were archaeologically monitored. The aim of the work was to identify areas of the site which had already been truncated to such that no potential archaeological deposits remained, and areas where potential archaeological deposits did survive. The work was commissioned by Gill Macquarie, Synergy Construction & Property Consultants LLP, on behalf of Islington Council, and was undertaken by the author between the 23<sup>rd</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> October 2009.

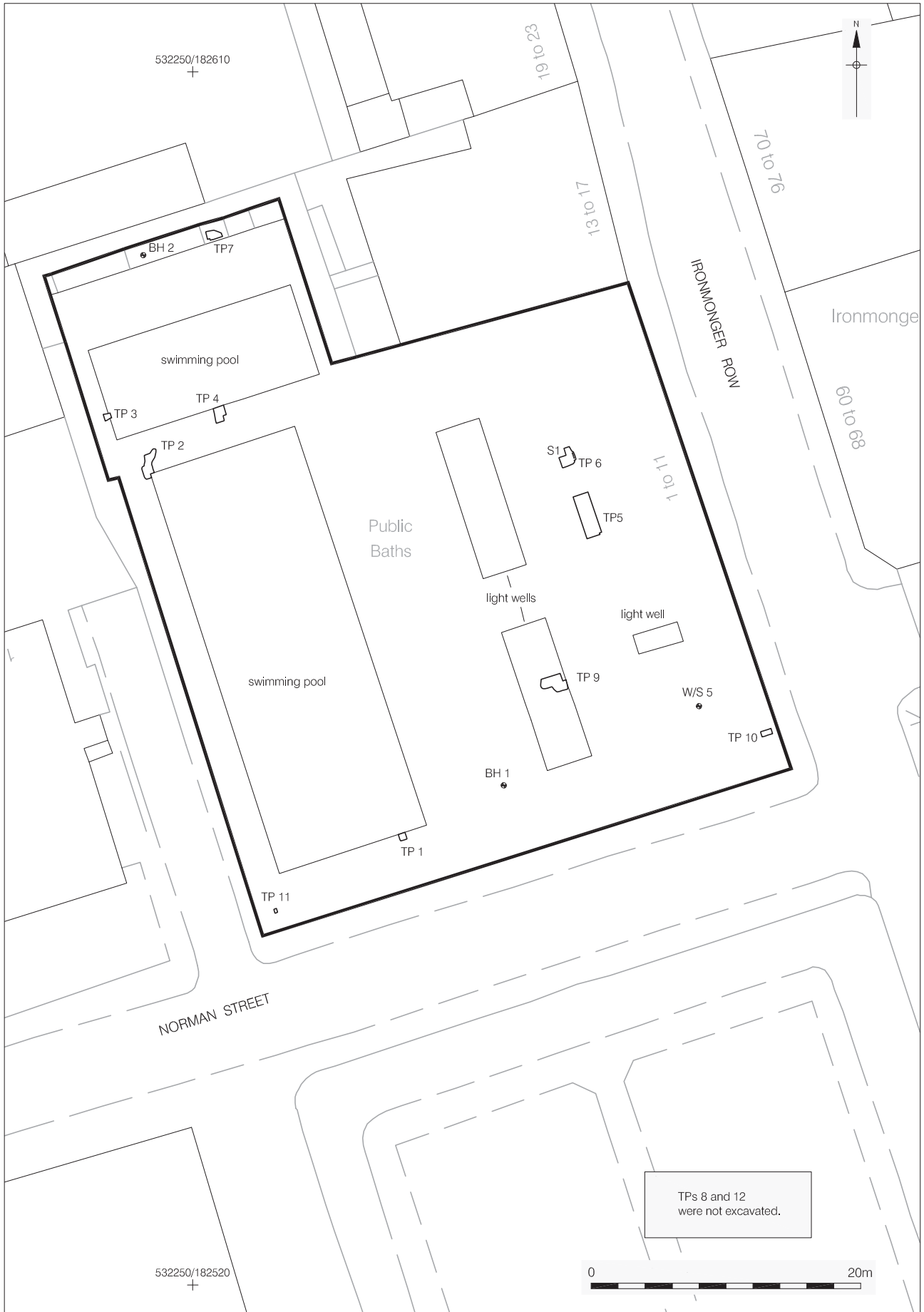
1.2 The original scope of the works intended to carry out more site investigation locations but the depth and thickness of concrete limited what could be achieved. The test pits varied in size and depth and are located on Figure 2 and the locations are below:

<i>Test Pit/Borehole Number</i>	<i>Approximate Location</i>
TP 1	South east corner of main swimming pool
TP 2	North west corner of main swimming pool
TP 3	West side of training pool
TP 4	Centrally, south side of training pool
TP 5	Centrally, north end of laundry block
TP 6	North wall of laundry block
TP 7	North wall of swimming block
TP 8	Not excavated
TP 9	In the light well between swimming pool block and laundry block at the southern end
TP 10	East wall of Laundry Block near south east corner
TP 11	South west corner of swimming pool complex
TP 12	Not excavated
BH 1	Boiler room in south east of swimming pool complex
BH 2	Light well north of north wall of swimming block
WS 5	Boiler room in south east of laundry block



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Figure 1  
Site Location  
1:20,000 at A4



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Figure 2  
 Trench Location  
 1:400 at A4

## **2 Description Of Results**

### **2.1 Test Pit 1**

This test pit was located on a concrete pad supporting the south wall (deep end) of the main swimming pool, 1.60m west of the southeast corner. It measured 0.60m north-south by 0.50m east-west, but breaking out the concrete was abandoned at a depth of 0.40m. The concrete was then drilled further to a depth of 1.00m below present ground level (16.16m AOD) but no base to the concrete was reached within that depth.

### **2.2 Test Pit 2**

This test pit was located against the north edge of the main swimming pool on its northwest corner. It was initially 1.70m north-south by 0.80m east-west broken into the concrete then the excavation stepped into the underlying layers, reducing to an area measuring 0.30m by 0.30m, with a maximum depth of 1.10m.

In this pit the earliest context seen was a layer of dark blackish sandy silt [36]. This survived to heights of between 17.59m AOD and 16.94m AOD, though its base was not seen. This layer was interpreted as a build up of post-medieval made ground. The south part of the trench was occupied by concrete slabs acting as support for the north end of the swimming pool. Above the made ground was a layer of make-up consisting of brick and concrete fragments [35]. This provided support for the concrete ground floor slab [34] in this area.

### **2.3 Test Pit 3**

This test pit was located against the west wall of the training pool 1.60m north of the southwest corner. It was excavated to a depth of 0.50m. It measured 0.50m north-south by 0.50m east-west. The western side of the pit consisted of the reinforced concrete foundation of the main west wall of the swimming pool complex.

To the east at a height of 0.50m below ground level was the top of the main structural ground beam for the training pool. Excavation stopped at that point and the foundation was then drilled to a further depth of 0.70m but no base to this concrete was found. Above this foundation was a layer acting as infill between the different concrete foundations. This acted as a base to the present 0.15m deep concrete floor slab.

### **2.4 Test Pit 4**

This test pit is located centrally against the south wall of the training pool. It was initially 1.10m north-south by 0.80m east-west later stepped and reduced to 0.50m by 0.50m. It was excavated to a depth of 2.60m below present ground level (15.44m AOD).

The earliest context seen in this trench was a layer of light orangey brown sandy clay [25], which was sealed by a layer of orangey brown sandy silt [14] at a top height of 16.19m AOD. Both these were interpreted as natural deposits. This was then overlain by and maybe cut into by [12] a grey brown clayey silt, perhaps indicating pitting in the area. This was in turn overlain by a thick layer (1.15m) of dark blackish grey silty clay [11], interpreted as post-medieval made ground. The top of this was at a height of 17.39m AOD. Above this was concrete layer 0.20m deep [10] interpreted as the general ground beam slab to the swimming pool building. A make up layer [9] filling in between the

various concrete foundations covered this and acted as support for the concrete floor slab [8].

## **2.5 Test Pit 5**

This test pit was located centrally at the north end of the Laundry Block. It was 0.80m north-south by 1.20m east-west later stepped and reduced to 0.40m by 0.40m. It was excavated to a depth of 1.90m.

The earliest context encountered in this test pit was a layer of orangey brown silty sand [24]. The top of this was at a height of 16.08m AOD and it was interpreted as a natural deposit. This was sealed by a layer of dark grey brown clayey sand [23], containing ceramic tile spot dated to circa 1480-1700. Above this was a layer of dark brownish grey silty clay [22] which also had peg tile (spot dated to the late medieval to early post-medieval period), with a top height of 16.98m AOD.

A layer of make-up [21] sealed [22] to the west and to the east the concrete base for a structural pillar. This also provided support for the original concrete ground slab [20] for the area with its original steps. A further level of make-up [19] then provided support for the present concrete floor slab [18], a modern alteration.

## **2.6 Test Pit 6**

This test pit was located centrally against the north wall of the laundry block. It was 1.30m north-south by 1.10m east-west later stepped and reduced to 0.70m by 0.80m. The test pit was excavated to a depth of 1.75m and then seen to occupy the large construction cut to the structural north wall of the Laundry Block. A further step was then detected at 2.40m below ground level. After cleaning, a section (Figure 4) to the east was revealed showing the archaeological stratigraphy of this part of the site.

The earliest context found here was a layer of light brown silty clay [33]. This was at least 1.05m deep with a top height 16.14m AOD. It contained no inclusions and therefore although atypical with natural in other trenches here must be considered natural as well. Possibly this was a palaeochannel or feature. Above this were a layer of dark orangey brown gravelly sand [32], and then a further layer of deep orangey brown silty sand [31]. This in turn was sealed by a mid orangey brown silty sand [30] followed by a layer of light grey clayey silt [29] which had a top height of 16.79m AOD.

Next in the sequence was a layer of dark blackish grey sandy silt [28]. This is post-medieval made ground and had a top height of 17.04m AOD. Above this was a layer of modern make up [27] for the recent non-structural wall alterations with an accompanying concrete floor slab [26].

An unstratified brick recovered from this test pit was spot dated to circa 1666 to 1800.

## **2.7 Test Pit 7**

This test was located against the outside of the north wall of the Swimming Pool Complex 2.80m west of the northeast corner. It was excavated to a depth of 0.20m and measured 0.70m north-south by 1.10m east-west. On the northern side was the heavily reinforced concrete foundation which supported the light well on the northern boundary of the baths complex. On the south side running along the frontage of the north wall were beginnings of the footings for this outside wall.



## **2.8 Test Pit 8**

This test pit was not excavated.

## **2.9 Test Pit 9**

This test pit was located in the central lightwell west of the door to the Laundry Boiler Room. Initially it measured by 1.30m north-south by 1.70m east-west later stepped and reduced to 0.70m by 0.60m. It was excavated to a maximum depth of 1.50m at a height of 13.79m AOD, which also seemed to be the top of the observed water table.

The earliest context encountered was a layer of mid greyish-brown silty sand [7]. This was sealed by a deposit of mid orangey-brown sandy gravel [6] with a top height of 14.69m AOD. Both these are interpreted as natural deposits. To the east a large concrete foundation for the western outside wall of the Laundry Block cut through these deposits. A brick wall [5] orientated east-west, and retaining soil to the north, sat directly on this large foundation to the east and on its own concrete foundation further west. The wall was clearly contemporary with the 1938 building.

Above this was a layer of re-deposited orangey brown sandy gravel [4], which acted as a base to a perhaps temporary concrete layer [3] 50mm deep. This butts against the top of the large foundation to the east. A further make up layer [2] then sealed the whole trench acting as a bed for the 0.15m deep concrete floor slab [1].

## **2.10 Test Pit 10**

This test pit was located against the inside of the east wall of the Laundry Block 1.80m north of the southeast corner of the building. The pit was initially 0.40m north-south by 0.80m east-west later stepped and reduced to 0.40m by 0.30m. It was excavated to a depth of 1.10m.

The earliest context within this trench was a layer of dark orangey brown sandy gravel [17]. This was interpreted as a natural deposit and survived to a height of 14.95m AOD. Above this was a layer of silty gravel make up [16]. This acted as an infill between the eastern outside wall of the laundry block extending down to this level by a number of brick step outs and then sitting on a concrete foundation and the heavy structural concrete floor slab [15] in this area 0.35m deep.

## **2.11 Test Pit 11**

This test pit was located in the extreme southwest corner of the swimming pool complex. It measured 0.30m north-south by 0.20m east-west but was abandoned after drilling just 0.15m into the concrete there. This was the concrete supporting the outside wall of the Swimming Pool Building. Later, close by south of the swimming pool, the concrete was again drilled into, to a depth of 0.90m, but again no base to the concrete was found.

## **2.12 Test Pit 12**

This test pit was not excavated.

### **2.13 Borehole 1**

This borehole was located in the Boiler Room of the swimming pool. A number of sand and gravel layers were drilled through rising to a layer of dense orangey green sandy gravel. The top of this context was as 16.10m AOD and this was interpreted as natural gravel with staining perhaps associated with the presence of the gravel below the machine room of the baths.

Above this was a layer of soft brown clay sealed by a layer of made ground with a top height of 16.90m AOD.

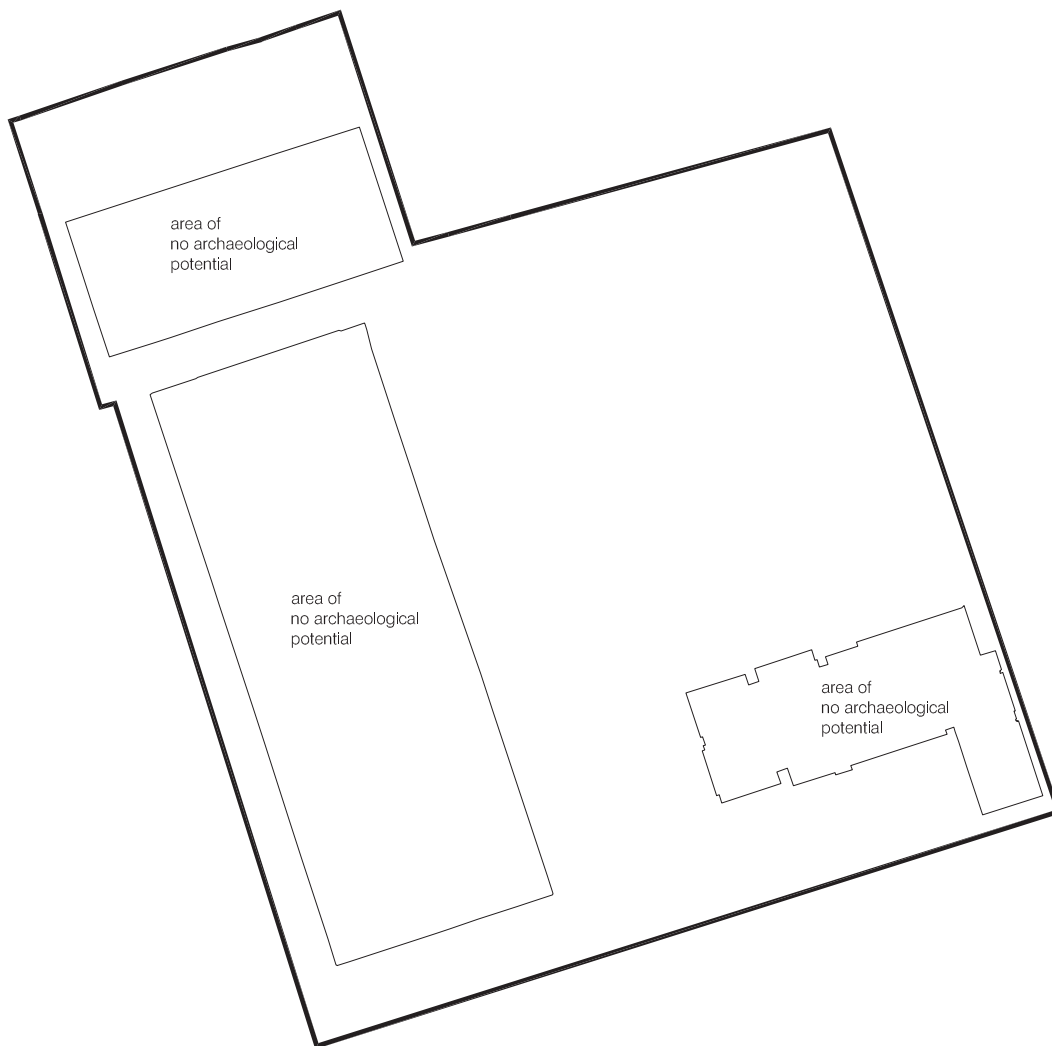
### **2.14 Borehole 2**

This borehole was located centrally in the lightwell to the north of the swimming pool complex. Here the concrete was cored to a depth 1.30m. The base of the concrete foundation was not found and therefore the borehole was abandoned.

### **2.15 Window Sample Hole 5**

This window sample hole was located in the machine room of the Laundry Block. In this hole a layer of mid orangey brown sandy silt interpreted as a natural deposit was encountered at 14.74m AOD.

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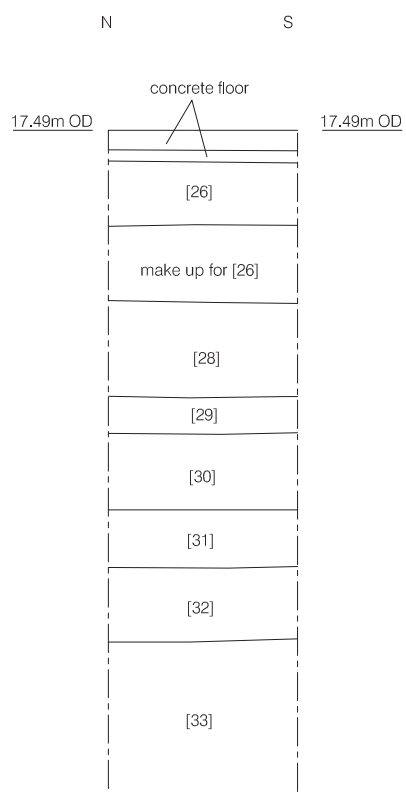


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Figure 3  
Areas of no archaeological potential  
1:400 at A4



Section 1  
 Test Pit 6  
 West Facing



Figure 4  
 Section 1  
 1:20 at A4

### **3 Conclusions**

TP1, TP3, TP7 and TP11 did not penetrate the concrete floor and ground slabs.

Test pits, boreholes and window samples in the southeast of the complex showed that where existing floor levels were below circa 17m AOD no potential archaeological deposits survived. Therefore a sequence of rooms (Figure 3) with floor levels of circa 15m AOD, and the construction areas for the two main swimming pools are therefore devoid of any archaeological deposits.

TP2, TP4, TP5 and T6 revealed the survival of late post-medieval layers, containing some probably residual earlier ceramic building materials.

Any future archaeological investigation should only be targeted at where proposed groundworks go through areas of archaeological potential.

### **4 Acknowledgements**

Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited would like to thank Gill Macquarie of Synergy for commissioning the work on behalf of Islington Council. The author would like to thank the staff of the baths and Ground engineering Limited for their help and co-operation. He would also like to thank Jenni Simonson for the CAD illustrations, Kevin Hayward for the CBM spot dating and Peter Moore for the project management and editing.

Context Index

## OASIS DATA COLLECTION FORM: England

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**OASIS ID: preconst1-67021**

#### Project details

Project name	Ironmonger Row Baths
Short description of the project	An archaeological watching brief was undertaken on a geotechnical investigation and was able to define areas where all potential archaeological deposits had been truncated and where post-medieval deposits survived.
Project dates	Start: 23-10-2009 End: 29-10-2009
Previous/future work	No / Yes
Any associated project reference codes	IRB09 - Sitecode
Type of project	Recording project
Site status	Local Authority Designated Archaeological Area
Current Land use	Community Service 2 - Leisure and recreational buildings
Monument type	SOILS Uncertain
Significant Finds	CBM Post Medieval
Investigation type	'Watching Brief'
Prompt	Voluntary/self-interest

### **Project location**

Country	England
Site location	GREATER LONDON ISLINGTON FINSBURY Ironmonger Row Baths
Postcode	EC1V 3QF
Study area	2000.00 Square metres
Site coordinates	TQ 3225 8258 51.5261299206 -0.09337641712150 51 31 34 N 000 05 36 W Point
Height OD / Depth	Min: 15.79m Max: 16.84m

### **Project creators**

Name of Organisation	Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd
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Project design originator	Peter Moore
Project director/manager	Peter Moore
Project supervisor	Phil Frickers
Type of sponsor/funding body	Borough Council
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### **Project archives**

Physical Archive Exists?	No
Physical Archive	LAARC



recipient

Digital Archive recipient LAARC

Digital Contents 'Stratigraphic'

Digital Media available 'Spreadsheets','Text'

Paper Archive recipient LAARC

Paper Contents 'Stratigraphic'

Paper Media available 'Context sheet','Map','Plan','Report','Section'

## **Project bibliography**

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