

**6 Palace Green, Kensington Gardens, Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea, London W8  
An Archaeological Watching Brief**

**Site Code: PGK 05  
Central National Grid Reference: TQ 2569 7996**

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**Commissioning Client: CgMs Consulting on behalf of Ladbrooke Homes**

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## **1 ABSTRACT**

- 1.1 This report details the background and findings from archaeological monitoring and recording of ground reduction work carried out by Whiterock Engineering at 6 Palace Green, Kensington Gardens, Royal London Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, London W8 (Figs. 1 & 2) from the 10<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> May 2005.
- 1.2 The ground reduction work was carried out between the northern external wall of the property and the northern property boundary, prior to the construction of a wine cellar in this location. The ground was initially reduced to permit underpinning of the northern property wall and to allow a mechanical excavator to reach to a greater depth in order to excavate in the footprint of the proposed cellar. It was this work that was archaeologically monitored.
- 1.3 The ground reduction revealed only modern deposits overlying natural terrace sands and gravels.

## **2 INTRODUCTION**

- 2.1 An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited between the 10<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> May 2005, on ground reduction carried out at 6 Palace Green, Kensington Gardens, Royal London Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, London W8, National Grid Reference TQ 2569 7996 (Figs. 1 & 2).
- 2.2 The ground reduction work was monitored in order to ascertain the extent of archaeological evidence within the study area. The monitoring was carried out to meet the requirements of Policy Planning Guidance<sup>16</sup> and the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea Unitary Development Plan.
- 2.3 A Method Statement for the Archaeological Watching Brief was written by Tim Bradley of PCA (Bradley 2005). The work was commissioned by Richard Meager of CgMs Consulting on behalf of Ladbrooke Homes. The watching brief was undertaken by the author and was project managed by Tim Bradley.
- 2.4 The site code is PGK 05.



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Figure 1  
Site Location  
1:20,000



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Figure 2  
Trench Location  
1:625

### **3 PLANNING BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 The work undertaken by Pre-Construct Archaeology and Whiterock Engineering conformed to the Department of the Environment Planning Policy Guidance Notice 16, which provides guidance for planning authorities, property owners, developers and others on the preservation and investigation of archaeological remains.
- 3.2 Furthermore, the work conformed to the requirements of the Development Plan policy framework provided by the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea Unitary Development Plan.
- 3.3 The purpose of the investigation was to identify, record and retrieve (as far as possible) archaeological remains that may have been uncovered in the course of the ground reduction.

## **4 GEOLOGICAL AND TOPOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND**

### **4.2 Geology**

4.2.1 The site is underlain by Thames River Terrace Deposits of gravel, sandy and clayey in part, overlying London Clay.

4.2.2 In the vicinity of the site, the gravel terrace is classified as the Boyn Hill Terrace and is generally at approximately 15m to 25m OD.

4.2.4 To the south of the study site, the thickness of terrace gravel declines and eventually disappears.

### **4.3 Topography**

4.3.1 The topography of the area suggests that it occupies part of a gravel terrace that gently slopes up from south to north, though there was no change in elevation within the confines of the site.



## **5 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

### **5.1 Prehistoric**

5.1.1 Recent excavations conducted in the general vicinity, namely at The Phillimores and Sir John Atkins Building on Campden Hill (Bradley forthcoming; Moore *et al.* forthcoming), and at Hyde Park (Bradley 2003), have revealed evidence of Bronze Age and Iron Age settlement and other activities.

### **5.2 Roman**

5.2.1 Evidence for a considerable period of Roman occupation in the area has been identified at Hyde Park and some evidence for additional activity has been revealed on Campden Hill. The proposed development lies between two Roman roads, one to the north (represented by Notting Hill Gate), and one to the south (broadly represented by Kensington High Street).

### **6.1 Saxon – Medieval – Post-Medieval**

6.1.1 The development site appears to have lain within the Kensington glebe estate during the medieval period and is likely to have been used as gardens/agricultural/pasture land.

## **6 OBJECTIVES**

- 6.1 To establish whether the ground has been impacted upon by 20<sup>th</sup> century development on the site.
- 6.2 If so, to determine whether any archaeological strata has survived below the areas of recent disturbance.
- 6.3 If possible to ascertain the nature of prehistoric land uses at the site.
- 6.4 If possible to ascertain the nature of Roman land uses at the site.
- 6.5 If possible to ascertain the nature of Saxon and early medieval land uses at the site.
- 6.6 If possible to ascertain the nature of later medieval and post medieval land use.

## **7 METHODOLOGY**

- 7.1 The investigation area consisted of a narrow strip of land between the northern external wall of 6 Palace Green and the northern property boundary wall, an area measuring c. 15m east-west by c. 3m north-south (Fig. 2).
- 7.2 The working methodology involved the gradual ground reduction in this area by mechanical excavator, under archaeological supervision. The material was removed in spits to a depth of c. 2m, well into natural deposits, though because of logistical reasons the work initially only progressed laterally c. 1m at a time. However, in the eastern half of the study area a more general ground reduction to a much shallower depth, though still into natural deposits, was required and the spits removed were continuous in this area.
- 7.3 All material excavated was observed and stratigraphic changes were recorded until natural deposits were penetrated. Changing depths of the underlying materials were recorded at intervals and a running section drawing produced (Fig. 3).
- 7.4 A Bench Mark with a value of 20.07m OD is located on a wall at the Romanian Embassy at 4 Palace Green, though this was inaccessible. Site levels were therefore calculated from a spot height in the road to the northeast of the site (value 24.20m OD).

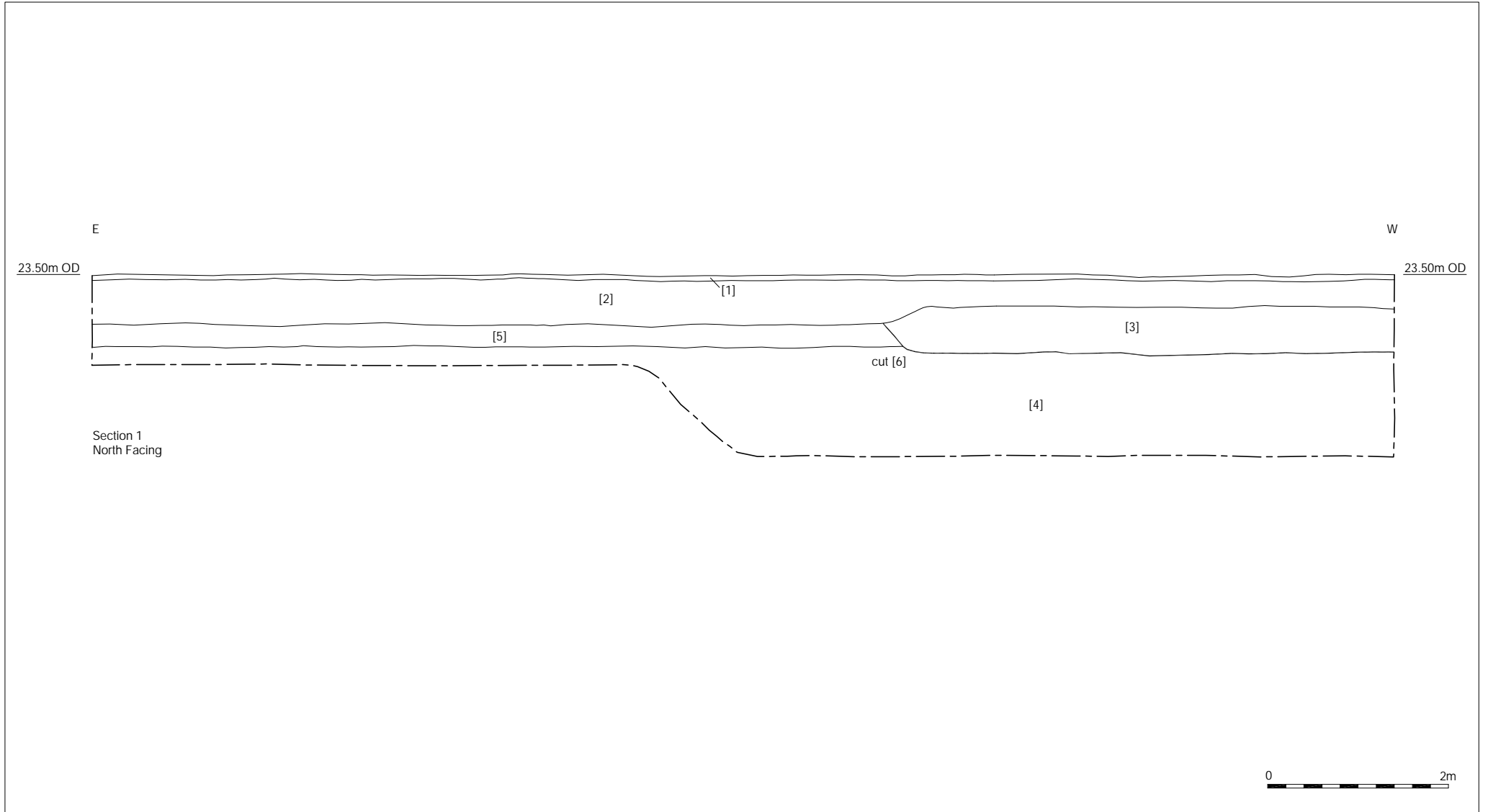


Figure 3  
Section 1  
1:60

## 8 RESULTS

- 8.1 The earliest deposit recorded was a friable, light yellowish orange natural sand with some gravelly lenses [4] (top elevation = 22.7m OD). It was in excess of 1.2m deep and was a part of the natural terrace deposits of the area.
- 8.2 In the eastern half of the area the natural sand and gravel was overlain by a deposit of firm, mottled mid reddish orange and light yellowish grey silt [5] (top elevation = 22.98m OD). This was just 0.25m thick and appeared to resemble a thin, natural brickearth deposit.
- 8.3 In the western half of the area deposit [5] was totally truncated by an extensive modern cut [6], which also partially cut into the underlying sand and gravel. The cut appeared to have been associated with drain construction, wall underpinning and other previous works associated with the building. It was 0.50m deep and filled with a mixed deposit of redeposited natural sand and building rubble [3] (top elevation = 23.15m OD).
- 8.4 The natural silt [5] and modern backfill [3] were sealed by a 0.30m thick deposit of firm, very dark greyish brown mixed deposit containing frequent rubble inclusions [2] (top elevation = 23.45m OD). This appeared to have been laid as a bedding layer for the modern 'Tarmac' surface [1], 50mm thick and with a top elevation of 23.5m OD.
- 8.5 Monitoring of the ground reduction revealed that no archaeological deposits survived in the area. If there had been extant archaeological deposits they had been truncated by modern disturbances. However, the only materials observed during machining and examination of spoil heaps were fragments of 20<sup>th</sup> century building rubble, suggesting there had been no earlier deposits present and therefore no truncation of archaeological levels. It appears, therefore, that all activity on site dated to 1920s building construction and later works.

## **9 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

- 9.1 Pre-Construct Archaeology and the author would like to thank Ladbrooke Homes for funding the watching brief, Richard Meager of CgMs Consulting for commissioning PCA to monitor the works, and Tony Thresh and the staff of Whiterock Engineering for their assistance and cooperation. The author would like to thank Tim Bradley for project management and Hayley Baxter for the illustrations.

## 10 BIBLIOGRAPHY

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Bradley, T. 2005 *Method Statement for an Archaeological Watching Brief at 6 Palace Green, Kensington Gardens, Royal London Borough of Kensington & Chelsea, London W8*, Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd., unpub. report.

Bradley, T. forthcoming Archaeological excavations at the Sir John Atkins Building, Campden Hill, Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, London W8. *LAMAS*.

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## APPENDIX 1: OASIS FORM

### OASIS DATA COLLECTION FORM

**OASIS ID: preconst1-8287**

#### Project details

Project name	6 Palace Green, Kensington Gardens
Short description of the project	A watching brief was carried out on ground reduction between the northern external wall of the building at 6 Palace Green and the northern property boundary wall. The work was carried out prior to the construction of a wine cellar in the area. The monitoring revealed that modern deposits directly overlay natural levels or cut into natural deposits. No archaeological finds or features were present.
Project dates	Start: 10-05-2005 End: 13-05-2005
Previous/future work	No / No
Any associated project reference codes	PGK 05 - Sitecode
Type of project	Recording project
Investigation type	'Watching Brief'
Prompt	Planning condition

#### Project location

Country	England
Site location	GREATER LONDON KENSINGTON AND CHELSEA KENSINGTON 6 Palace Green, Kensington Gardens, Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, London W8
Postcode	LONDON W8
Study area	45.00 Square metres
National grid reference	TQ 2569 7996 Point
Height OD	Min: 22.70m Max: 22.98m

#### Project creators



Name of Organisation	Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd
Project brief originator	CgMs Consultants Ltd
Project design originator	Tim Bradley
Project director/manager	Tim Bradley
Project supervisor	Peter Boyer

### Project archives

Physical Archive Exists?	No
Digital Archive recipient	LAARC
Digital Media available	'Text'
Digital Archive Exists?	Yes
Paper Archive recipient	LAARC
Paper Contents	'Stratigraphic'
Paper Media available	'Section'
Paper Archive Exists?	Yes

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## Project bibliography

1

Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	6 Palace Green, Kensington Gardens, Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, London W8: An Archaeological Watching Brief
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