

**SALEM ROAD  
CITY OF WESTMINSTER  
LONDON W2**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING  
BRIEF**

**SAX10  
OCTOBER 2010**



**PRE-CONSTRUCT ARCHAEOLOGY**

**DOCUMENT VERIFICATION**

**SALEM ROAD, CITY OF WESTMINSTER,  
LONDON W2**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF**

Quality Control

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**An Archaeological Watching Brief at Salem Road, City of Westminster,  
London W2**

**Site Code: SAX10**

**Central National Grid Reference: TQ 2575 8090**

**Written by Richard Humphrey**

**Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited, October 2010**

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## CONTENTS

1	Abstract .....	3
2	Introduction.....	4
3	Planning Background .....	7
4	Geology and Topography.....	8
5	Archaeological and Historical Background.....	9
6	Methodology .....	12
7	Archaeological Sequence.....	13
8	Conclusions .....	16
9	Acknowledgements .....	17
10	Bibliography.....	18

## APPENDICES

11	Appendix 1: Context Register .....	19
12	Appendix 2: Matrix.....	20
13	Appendix 3: OASIS Data Collection Form .....	21

## ILLUSTRATIONS

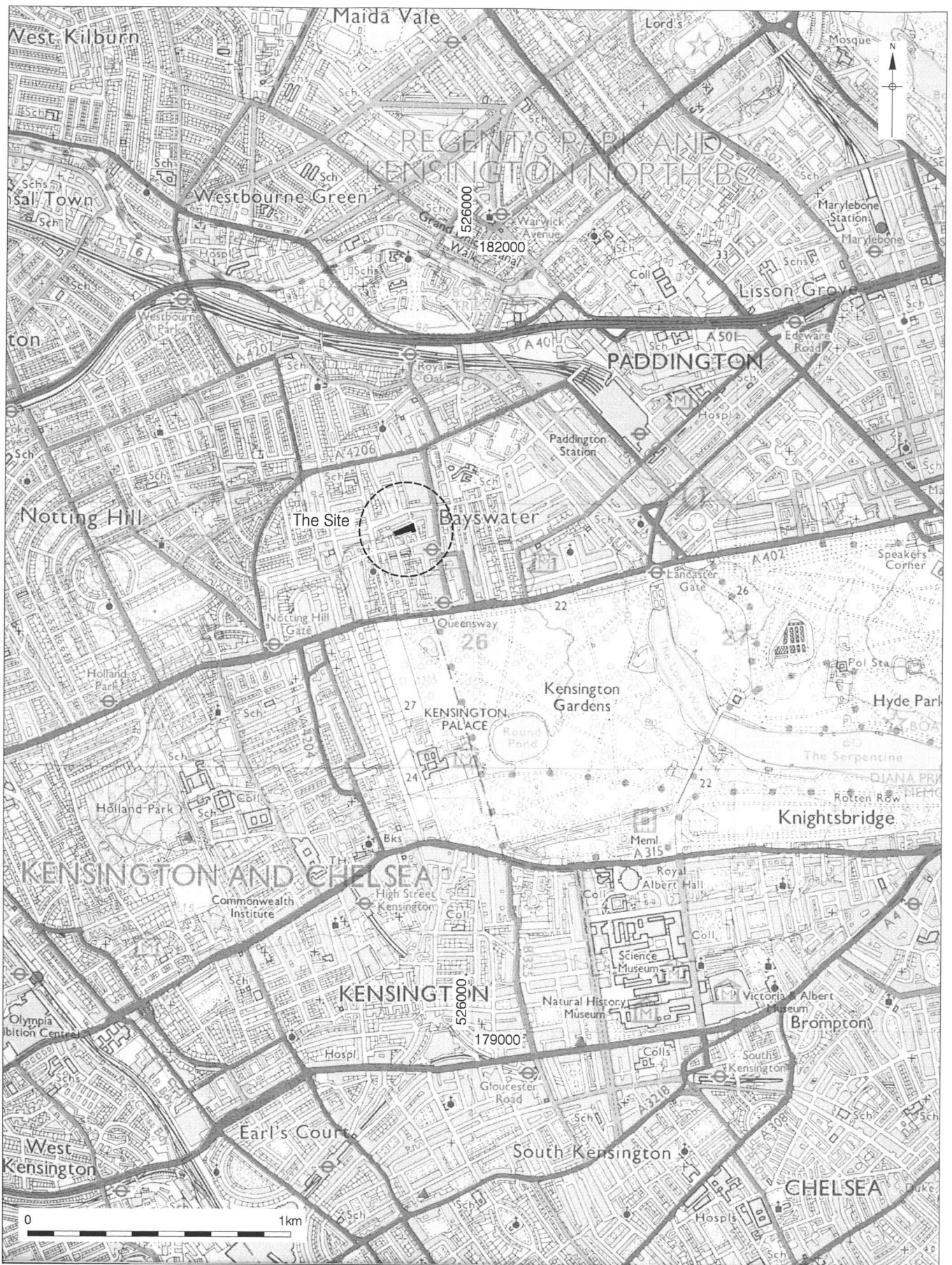
Figure 1: Site Location .....	5
Figure 2: Plan of Areas Monitored .....	14
Figure 4: Section 1 .....	15

## **1 ABSTRACT**

- 1.1 This report details the results and working methods of archaeological watching brief undertaken during ground reduction of a proposed basement at Salem Road, City of Westminster, London W2. The watching brief, commissioned by CgMs Consulting on behalf of Assael Architecture Ltd, was undertaken by Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited intermittently between the 3<sup>rd</sup> August and 1<sup>st</sup> October 2010.
- 1.2 The works consisted of monitoring the excavation of a trench for sheet metal piles encircling the site as well as ground reduction of the basement to a depth of approximately 6m below ground surface. The results of the investigations suggest that widespread demolition and landscaping of the site had occurred with 19<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> century, with made ground seen to overlie natural London Clay deposits. The made ground was overlain by the now-demolished early 20<sup>th</sup> century warehouse building foundations or a modern concrete slab. No archaeological features pre-dating the 20th century were observed.

## 2 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 This report details the methodology and results of an archaeological watching brief conducted by Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd during ground reduction at Salem Road, City of Westminster, London W2.
- 2.2 The watching brief was undertaken intermittently between the 3<sup>rd</sup> August and 1<sup>st</sup> October 2010. The first phase of the investigation monitored the removal of a concrete slab belonging to the recently demolished building in the south east of the site as well as a trench excavated up against the southern boundary of the site where sheet metal piles were being exposed. Subsequent visits to the site monitored ground reduction of the eastern and western ends end of the site.
- 2.3 The work was commissioned by CgMs Consulting on behalf of Assael Architecture Ltd. The groundworks were undertaken by McGee Contractors. The watching brief was supervised by Richard Humphrey, John Payne and James Langthorne and project-managed by Tim Bradley for Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd. The work was monitored by Diane Walls and Robert Whytehead of English Heritage, Archaeology Advisors to the City of Westminster.
- 2.4 The site was bounded by Salem Road to the east, by Queen's Mews to the north, by the rear of a gym fronting Ilchester Gardens to the west and by Burnham Court and Windsor Court to the south (Figure 2). The area measured approximately 0.4 hectares.
- 2.5 The central National Grid Reference of the site is TQ 2575 8090.
- 2.6 The principle of the archaeological monitoring was to record any archaeological artefacts and ecofacts and their context. In addition the archaeological monitoring had the following objectives:
- To determine if possible the date of the earliest human activity in the area and the subsequent sequence of occupation
  - To help further inform our understanding of past activity in this area of West London
  - To record any significant archaeological deposits which may be exposed during the construction work
- 2.7 An archaeological Desk Based Assessment has been prepared for the site (Meager 2007). No previous archaeological investigations are known to have taken place on the site.
- 2.8 The site was given the specific code of SAX10.
-



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Figure 1  
Site Location  
1:20,000 at A4

### **3 PLANNING BACKGROUND**

#### **3.1 National Policy: Planning Policy Statement (PPS 5)**

3.1.1 In March 2010 the Department for Communities and Local Government issued Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment (PPS5), which provides guidance for planning authorities, property owners, developers and others on the investigation and preservation of archaeological remains.

3.1.2 In considering any planning application for development, the local planning authority will be guided by the policy framework set by government guidance, in this instance PPS5, by current Unitary Development Plan policy and by other material considerations.

#### **3.2 Local Policy: City of Westminster Unitary Development Plan**

3.2.1 The fieldwork aims to satisfy the objectives of the City of Westminster, which fully recognize the importance of the buried heritage for which they are the custodians. The Council's Archaeology Policy, as defined in the City of Westminster's Unitary Development Plan (adopted 24 January 2007), is as follows:

##### **DES 16: WORLD HERITAGE SITE**

Aim

10.188 To safeguard the World Heritage Site.

##### **POLICY DES 16: WORLD HERITAGE SITE**

Permission will only be granted for developments that protect and conserve the character, appearance, setting and ecological value of the World Heritage Site

Policy application

10.189 Although no additional statutory controls follow from the designation of a World Heritage Site, PPG15: Planning and the Historic Environment states, in paragraph 2.22, that the designation highlights the outstanding international importance of the site which should be a key material consideration to take into account when determining planning and listed building consent applications. Great weight is placed upon the need to protect them for future generations. Development proposals affecting these sites or their settings need to be compatible with this objective and require careful scrutiny, often by way of formal environmental assessments, to ensure that their immediate and long term impact are fully evaluated.

##### **Chapter 10: Urban Design and Conservation**

City of Westminster 552 Unitary Development Plan adopted 24 January 2007

##### **Reason**

10.190 The member states of United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation UNESCO adopted the Convention concerning the Protection of World Cultural and Natural Heritage in 1972. This Convention provided for the creation of the World Heritage Committee which, in 1987, inscribed the area formed by the Palace of Westminster, St Margaret's and Westminster Abbey as a World Heritage Site, now one of twenty six in the United Kingdom. This area has thus been recognised as being of 'outstanding universal value from the historical, aesthetic, ethnological or anthropological point of view'.



## **4 GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY**

### **4.1 Geology**

4.1.1 The solid geology of the site is shown by the Institute of Geological Sciences (IGS 1979) as London Clay deposits forming the London Basin.

4.1.2 Further detail is provided by the 1:50'000 British Geological Survey Map for North London (Sheet 256: 1994) that shows the underlying geology of the site to be London Clay, immediately to the north of an area of Lynch Hill Gravels.

4.1.3 No site-specific geotechnical information was available prior to these works.

### **4.2 Topography**

4.2.1 The site is roughly level with a spot height of 25.60m OD situated at the junction of Moscow Road and Ilchester Gardens, southwest of the area.

4.2.2 No geological or topographical anomalies are known within the vicinity of the site.

## **5 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

5.1 The following is taken from the Desk Based Assessment (Meager 2007):

### **5.2 Prehistoric- Palaeolithic, Mesolithic and Neolithic**

5.2.1 Palaeolithic finds from the area include a flint hand axe derived from a cutting for the Great Western Railway, northeast of the site.

5.2.2 A Mesolithic axe head was found in Kensington Gardens by the army barracks, south of the site.

5.2.3 No finds of Neolithic date have been identified within the area.

### **5.3 Bronze Age and Iron Age**

5.3.1 Ditches containing Bronze Age and Iron Age pottery were found in the northwest corner of Kensington Gardens, south of the site.

5.3.2 Four Iron Age Gaulish silver coins are known from Hyde Park, near the Russian or Czech embassies, south of the site. Undiagnostic flintwork has been identified in Kensington Gardens, south of the site.

5.3.3 The findspots mentioned above indicate a 'background noise' of activity during the Bronze and Iron Ages within the area.

### **5.4 Roman**

5.4.1 The line of Watling Street, the Roman road which ran from Dover to London and north to St Albans and beyond, runs along the Edgware Road, east of the site. The line of the road is thought to have continued southeast to cross the Thames at Westminster. The line of Bayswater Road and Notting Hill Gate follows the line of the Roman road from Silchester to Colchester, south of the site.

5.4.2 Typical archaeological features associated with Roman roads can include evidence for settlement and occupation, roadside ditches and land division, together with quarry pits and burials.

5.4.3 Finds of Roman date in the area have included a coffin, containing an adult skeleton, found at a depth of six feet in Notting Hill to the west of the site. Remains of other wooden coffins, some containing bones and grave goods, were found at the same site.

## **5.5 Anglo-Saxon and Medieval**

5.5.1 A hamlet was known to exist at Bayswater in the sixteenth century. Another small settlement was recorded in 1356 as 'Nottynghull' at Notting Hill Gate to the southwest of the site, and another was situated around Westbourne Park Road, north of the site.

5.5.2 Kensington Church Street, which runs west of the western boundary of Hyde Park, southwest of the site, is thought to have medieval origins. Similarly Notting Hill Gate, the southward continuation of Bayswater Road, southwest of the site, is also thought to have been used during the medieval period.

5.5.3 A conduit head is known to have existed from the medieval period at the junction of Craven Road and Westbourne Terrace, east of the site.

5.5.4 The pattern of local settlement indicates that during the Anglo-Saxon and Medieval periods the site lay in open land.

## **5.6 Post Medieval and Modern**

5.6.1 The site lay in open fields at the time of Rocque's Survey of 1745

5.6.2 Greenwood's Survey of 1827 shows the layout of Salem Street, running east-west and north south. The site is shown occupied by buildings fronting the northern side of Salem Road with an open field to the north.

5.6.3 The First Edition Ordnance Survey (1872) shows that the vicinity of the site has become completely developed with houses. The site is shown occupied by buildings fronting Salem Gardens, with rear areas to the north. The Second Edition Ordnance Survey (1894-6) shows no change.

5.6.4 Drainage plans held in the Westminster City Archives dated April 1913 show the construction of the warehouse that up until recently occupied the site.

- 5.6.5 The Third Edition Ordnance Survey (1914) shows the removal of Salem Gardens and all of the buildings formerly within the site. The site is shown occupied by a single large structure fronting Salem Road, with open space to the west. Information from the Westminster City Archive suggests that the garages on the southern boundary of the site were added in 1928. The LCC Revised Ordnance Survey (1936-9) shows the presence of the garages and the westward extension of the building within the site.
- 5.6.6 The relevant World War Two bomb damage map (1896) shows the western and eastern ends of the site coloured yellow, signifying 'blast damage, minor in nature'.
- 5.6.7 The 1954 Ordnance Survey shows a 'ruin' marked at the western end of the site, and an outside staircase on the northern elevation, but otherwise no significant changes. Successive Ordnance Surveys dated 1962 and 1971 show no further changes.
- 5.6.8 No 10 Salem Road was converted from a warehouse to mixed use, including ground floor auction space and seven duplex flats above, to designs by the architects CZWG in 1975-6, a development described in the relevant Buildings of England Volume as 'cheerfully vulgar' (Cherry & Pevsner 1999: 690-691; Jones and Woodward 1983: 163).
- 5.6.9 The site has been named 'The Cloisters' on the 2006 Ordnance Survey, but no structural changes are shown.

## 6 METHODOLOGY

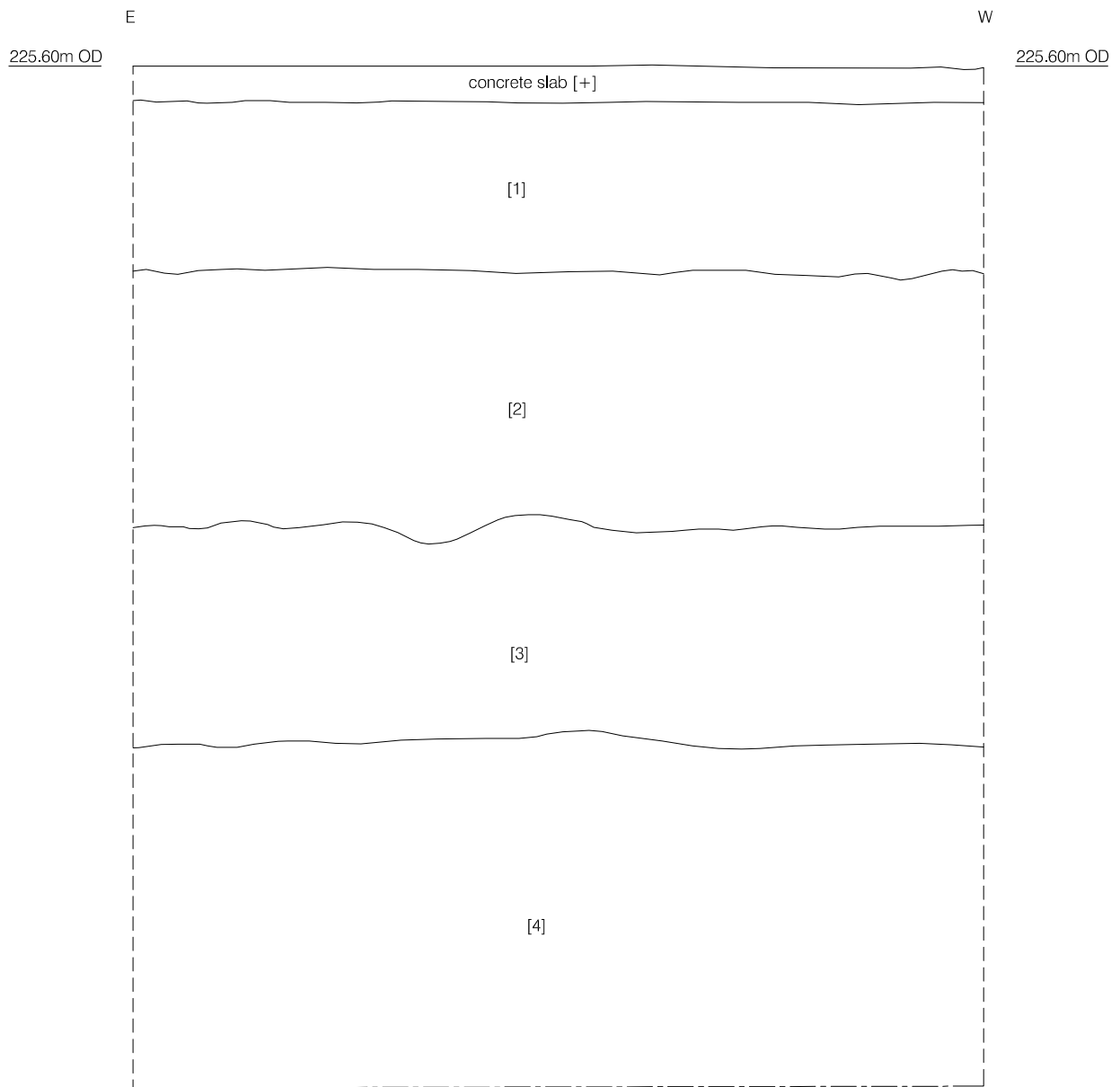
- 6.1 A Specification for an Archaeological Monitoring Exercise has been prepared for the site (Meager 2009). This outlines the need for archaeological monitoring of the site during ground reduction of the proposed basement.
- 6.2 Ground reduction of the area for the proposed basement was undertaken to a general depth of 6.00m below ground level.
- 6.3 The first visit to the site on 3<sup>rd</sup> August 2010 observed that the former warehouse building, built in 1913 and converted into flats in 1976, had been demolished and removed with the only surviving remnant of the structure represented as a concrete floor in the east of the site. Much of the site was covered by disturbed ground, spoil heaps and machinery. Steel sheet piles were in the process of being driven into the ground around the perimeter of the site. Observations were made during the mechanised excavation of a trench required to expose the top of sheet piles on the southern side of the site. The removal of the concrete floor of the former warehouse structure in order to insert further piles was also monitored.
- 6.4 A second visit to the site on the 1<sup>st</sup> September 2010 monitored the ground reduction of the eastern side of the site. Approximately half to two-thirds of the area were reduced to a height of -3.00m below ground level. This area was reduced a further 3.00m.
- 6.5 Monitoring continued with a third site visit between the 27<sup>th</sup> September and 1<sup>st</sup> October 2010. This observed the ground reduction at the western end of the site to a depth of approximately -6.00m below ground level.
- 6.6 Site records were compiled in plan at a scale of 1:20 and in section at a scale of 1:10. All written data was entered on pro forma sheets following standard recording methods, and a photographic record using digital format was made as appropriate.
- 6.7 The work was undertaken following English Heritage guidelines (GLAAS 1998) and in accordance with the Specification (Meager 2009) which had been approved by Diane Walls of English Heritage, Archaeology Advisor to the City of Westminster.

## 7 ARCHAEOLOGICAL SEQUENCE

- 7.1 Observations made during the removal of the remaining concrete floor of the recently demolished early twentieth century warehouse revealed that beneath the floor, a layer of sandy-gravel levelling material directly overlay a thick, mid brown gravelly-clay horizon, [5]. This was interpreted as forming the natural London Clay stratigraphy.
- 7.2 The trench excavated on the southern boundary of the site in order to expose the top of the sheet piles revealed a sequence of redeposited dirty brown clay [6] overlying orange-brown gravels [7]. This appeared to be archaeologically sterile and therefore potentially representative of natural stratigraphy although closer examination was not possible and therefore may represent made ground.
- 7.3 A layer of compact, mid-grey clay, [4] was seen during ground reduction at the western end of the site (Figure 4). This was first seen at approximately 3.90m below ground level and extended to a depth of 6.00m below ground level. It was archaeologically sterile and thought to represent natural London Clay.
- 7.4 Layer [4] was sealed by clay horizon [3]. This has been interpreted as exposed and weathered naturally occurring London Clay. It was compacted and of a light to mid orange-grey colour with occasional sub-rounded pebble inclusions. It was seen across the western end of the site at a height of 2.65m below ground level and was 1.30m thick.
- 7.5 Modern levelling material, [2], overlay clay horizon [3]. This was composed of loose light to mid orange-brown silty-sand with frequent gravel inclusions. Ceramic building material and brick were also seen within this layer. It was seen at a height of 1.20m below ground level and was a maximum of 1.60m deep. The presence of brick fragments within this layer suggest it represents modern made ground.
- 7.6 An additional layer of made ground, [1], was seen to overlie [2]. This was friable to firm in compaction, mid to dark grey-brown in colour and composed of sandy-silt with inclusions of brick, timber and sub-rounded pebbles. It was seen at 0.20m below ground level and was a maximum of 1.00m thick.
- 7.7 In the western end of the site and overlying made ground layer [1] was a 0.20m thick layer of concrete, presumably from the floor of the recently demolished warehouse structure. The foundations of this structure were also seen to overlie made ground elsewhere on the site.



Figure 2  
 Areas Monitored  
 1:400 at A4



Section 1  
 Watching Brief Area monitored between 28 September - 1 October 2010  
 North Facing



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Figure 3  
 Section 1  
 1:40 at A4



## **8 CONCLUSIONS**

- 8.1 Naturally occurring London Clay was observed at the western end of the site, commencing at a height of 2.65m below ground level. A further clay deposit, also thought to be natural, was also seen immediately beneath the levelling layer for the concrete floor of the 1913 warehouse in the eastern end of the site.
- 8.2 Approximately 2.50m of modern made ground overlay natural clay in the western end of the site. This was deposited prior to the construction of the 1913 warehouse as illustrated by it being overlain by the brick foundations and concrete floors of the structure.
- 8.3 A gravel horizon seen in a trench excavated along the southern boundary of the site may also represent made ground similar to that seen in the west. However, they may be Lynch Hill Gravels and indicative of variation in natural stratigraphy.
- 8.4 Variation in the height of natural clay suggests that the western end of the site was much lower than that in the east and therefore was required to be elevated in order to form a level surface upon which the 1913 warehouse was built. The complete removal of the 19<sup>th</sup> century properties that dominated the area prior to the construction of the warehouse may have resulted in the lowering of natural stratigraphy across the western end of the site. This demolition and landscaping of the area is also likely to have removed any potentially surviving earlier archaeological remains.
- 8.5 No archaeological finds or features pre-dating the 20th century were identified during the investigation.

## **9 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

- 9.1 Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited would like to thank Richard Meager of CgMs Consulting for commissioning the fieldwork. Thanks are also extended to David de Butts of Mansell Construction for assistance on site and the staff at McGee who undertook the work.
- 9.2 Thanks are also extended to Diane Walls and Robert Whytehead of English Heritage, Archaeology Advisors to the City of Westminster, for monitoring the work.
- 9.3 The author would like to thank Tim Bradley for his project management, and Jenny Simonson for the illustrations.

## 10 BIBLIOGRAPHY

English Heritage, Greater London Archaeology Advisory Service, (1998) *Archaeological Guidance Papers: 1 Written Schemes of Investigation; 2 Desk-Based Assessments; 3 Standards and Practices in Archaeological Fieldwork in London; Archaeological Reports; 5 Evaluations*

Meager, R. (2007) *An Archaeological Desk Based Assessment of Land at Salem Road, London W2*. CgMs Consulting Ltd, unpublished report.

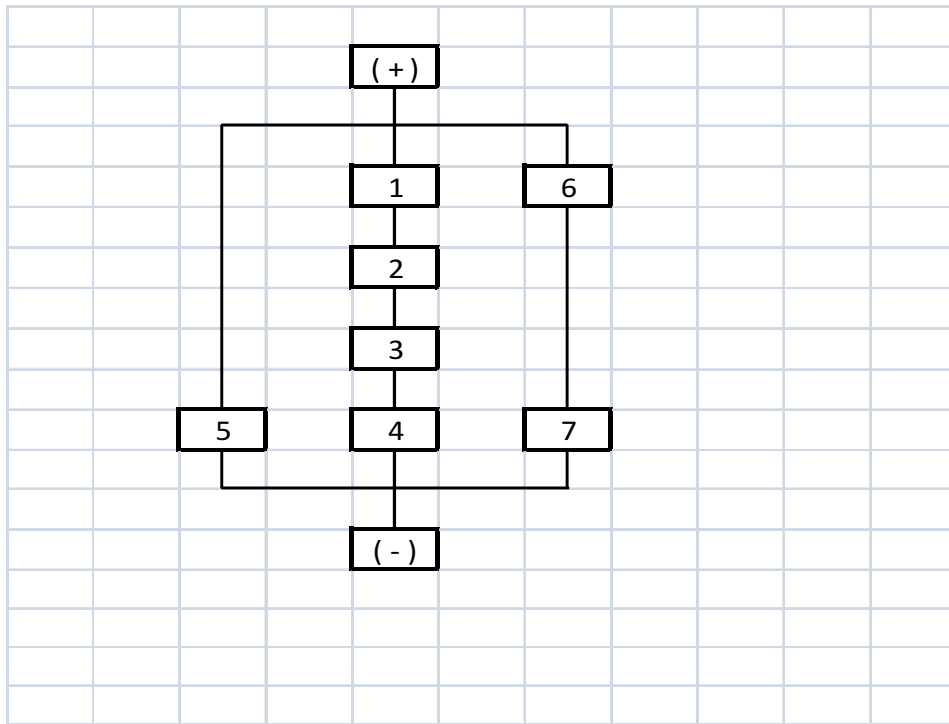
Meager, R. (2009) *Specification for an Archaeological Monitoring Exercise of Land at Salem Road, London W2*. CgMs Consulting, Ltd, unpublished report

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**11 APPENDIX 1: CONTEXT REGISTER**

Context	Type	Trench	Date	Name	Comments
1	Layer	WB	01/10/2010	JYL	Modern made ground
2	Layer	WB	01/10/2010	JYL	Made ground
3	Layer	WB	01/10/2010	JYL	Natural clay (exposed)
4	Layer	WB	01/10/2010	JYL	Natural clay (unexposed)
5	Layer	WB	03/08/2010	RH	Clay under concrete floor
6	Layer	WB	03/08/2010	RH	Redeposited clay
7	Layer	WB	03/08/2010	RH	Lynch Hill Gravels ?

12 APPENDIX 2: MATRIX



## 13 APPENDIX 3: OASIS DATA COLLECTION FORM

**OASIS ID: preconst1-83807**

### Project details

Project name	An Archaeological Watching Brief at Salem Road, City of Westminster, London W2
Short description of the project	An archaeological watching brief was undertaken during ground reduction of a proposed basement at Salem Road, City of Westminster, London W2. The works consisted of monitoring the excavation of a trench for sheet metal piles encircling the site as well as ground reduction of the basement to a depth of approximately 6m below ground surface. The results of the investigations suggest that widespread demolition and landscaping of the site had occurred with 19th to 20th century made ground seen to overlie natural clay deposits. This made ground was seen to be overlain by the now-demolished early 20th century warehouse building foundations or a modern concrete slab. No archaeological features pre-dating the 20th century were observed.
Project dates	Start: 03-08-2010 End: 01-10-2010
Previous/future work	No / No
Any associated project reference codes	SAX10 - Sitecode
Type of project	Recording project
Site status	None
Current Land use	Industry and Commerce 4 - Storage and warehousing
Investigation type	'Field observation', 'Recorded Observation'
Prompt	Voluntary/self-interest
Project location	
Country	England
Site location	GREATER LONDON CITY OF WESTMINSTER CITY OF WESTMINSTER Salem Road
Postcode	W2

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Study area	0.40 Hectares
Site coordinates	TQ 2575 8090 51.5125181586 -0.187633620527 51 30 45 N 000 11 15 W Point
Height OD / Depth	Min: 21.60m Max: 21.60m
Project creators	
Name of Organisation	PCA
Project brief originator	CgMs Consulting
Project design originator	Richard Meager
Project director/manager	Tim Bradley
Project supervisor	Richard Humphrey
Type of sponsor/funding body	Developer
Name of sponsor/funding body	CgMs Consulting
Project archives	
Physical Archive recipient	LAARC
Digital Archive recipient	LAARC
Paper Archive recipient	LAARC
Project bibliography	
1	
Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	An Archaeological Watching Brief at Salem Road, City of Westminster, London W2
Author(s)/Editor(s)	Humphrey, R.

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Date	2010
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